



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

# STATEN ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

*Policies, Programs  
and Priorities*

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING REPORT  
NEW YORK CITY • JUNE, 1966

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# CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

2 LAFAYETTE STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

June 9, 1966

Hon. John V. Lindsay, Mayor  
City Hall  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor Lindsay:

Attached herewith are the report and recommendations you requested the City Planning Commission to prepare on some of Staten Island's more immediate problems.

The report is an integral part of our agency's continuing program to develop a comprehensive plan for the City of New York. As part of this process, a number of the issues which are touched upon in the report -- such as industrial development, renewal, housing, recreation -- will be the subject of more detailed comprehensive planning studies.

This report concentrates on the programs, policies and priorities which we believe are important in establishing an appropriate climate for good planning. This approach, which marks a departure from the more traditional planning methods, is rooted in reality, takes account of continuing changes, and does not pretend to know all the answers -- especially before some of the questions have been raised.

Without compromising our responsibility to the future or our role as creative and imaginative planners, we have sought to develop a durable framework of policies and programs that will stand up under the weight of Staten Island's myriad development problems and will be flexible enough to adapt to the changes wrought by a changing economy, a changing technology, and the ever-changing dimension of public tastes and standards.

CHAIRMAN: WILLIAM F. R. BALLARD/VICE-CHAIRMAN: FRANCIS J. BLOUSTEIN

COMMISSIONERS: HARMON H. GOLDSTONE/ELINOR C. GUGGENHEIMER/LAWRENCE M. ORTON/BEVERLY M. SPATT/JAMES G. SWEENEY

SECRETARY: JOHN A. VITERITTI/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: RICHARD K. BERNSTEIN

## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Recognizing that time is a prime factor in dealing with Staten Island's problems, we would urge prompt review of our recommendations so that the City can proceed as rapidly as possible to help chart a course for a better Staten Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "W. F. R. Ballard". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

William F. R. Ballard  
Chairman

STATEN ISLAND DEVELOPMENT  
Policies, Programs and Priorities

CITY OF NEW YORK  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

*John V. Lindsay*, Mayor

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*William F. R. Ballard*, Chairman  
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*Richard K. Bernstein*, Executive Director

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Richly endowed by nature, Staten Island could provide a quality of residential life no longer attainable elsewhere in New York. However, the possibilities for imaginative design and sound development of vacant land may be foreclosed here as well unless immediate, positive action is undertaken by the City and community.





## I. I N T R O D U C T I O N

The purpose of this report is to identify the land development problems affecting Staten Island and to outline a program of actions to achieve a more desirable pattern of growth.

In assessing these problems, we have attempted to sort out the issues which require immediate and more radical action from those which can be handled routinely or call for longer-range study and analysis. The need for urgency is apparent. The completion of the Verrazano Bridge, the growth of the Metropolitan Region, the virtual disappearance of vacant land in the rest of the City have all placed great development pressures on Staten Island. These are pressures that will not be stayed. They call for prompt and effective policy measures by the City to insure some rational control over the destiny of our "last frontier."

While there is a need for speed, we can no longer look to stop-gap measures for relief. Rather, the City Planning Commission is proposing firm and continuing City programs which will help establish a new direction for City policy in Staten Island. It is our hope that in establishing a new and equitable set of rules for the development of the Island, we can guide new growth to the common advantage of the Staten Island resident, the developer, the property owner and the City--which is ultimately responsible to all the citizens of the City.

In preparing these recommendations, the Commission proceeded on the basis of several fundamental premises which we believe should be enunciated:

1. On the basis of all the data and trends we have analyzed, we believe that Staten Island's primary function in the next decade or so will be to provide land for new housing and both local and regional recreational and institutional uses. The stimulation of greater industrial and commercial activity will require more extensive efforts over the next few years and must be considered a longer-range project. Accordingly, initial land development efforts should be focused primarily upon improving the quality of residential environment and upon conserving or developing recreational and institutional facilities while the opportunities are still present.

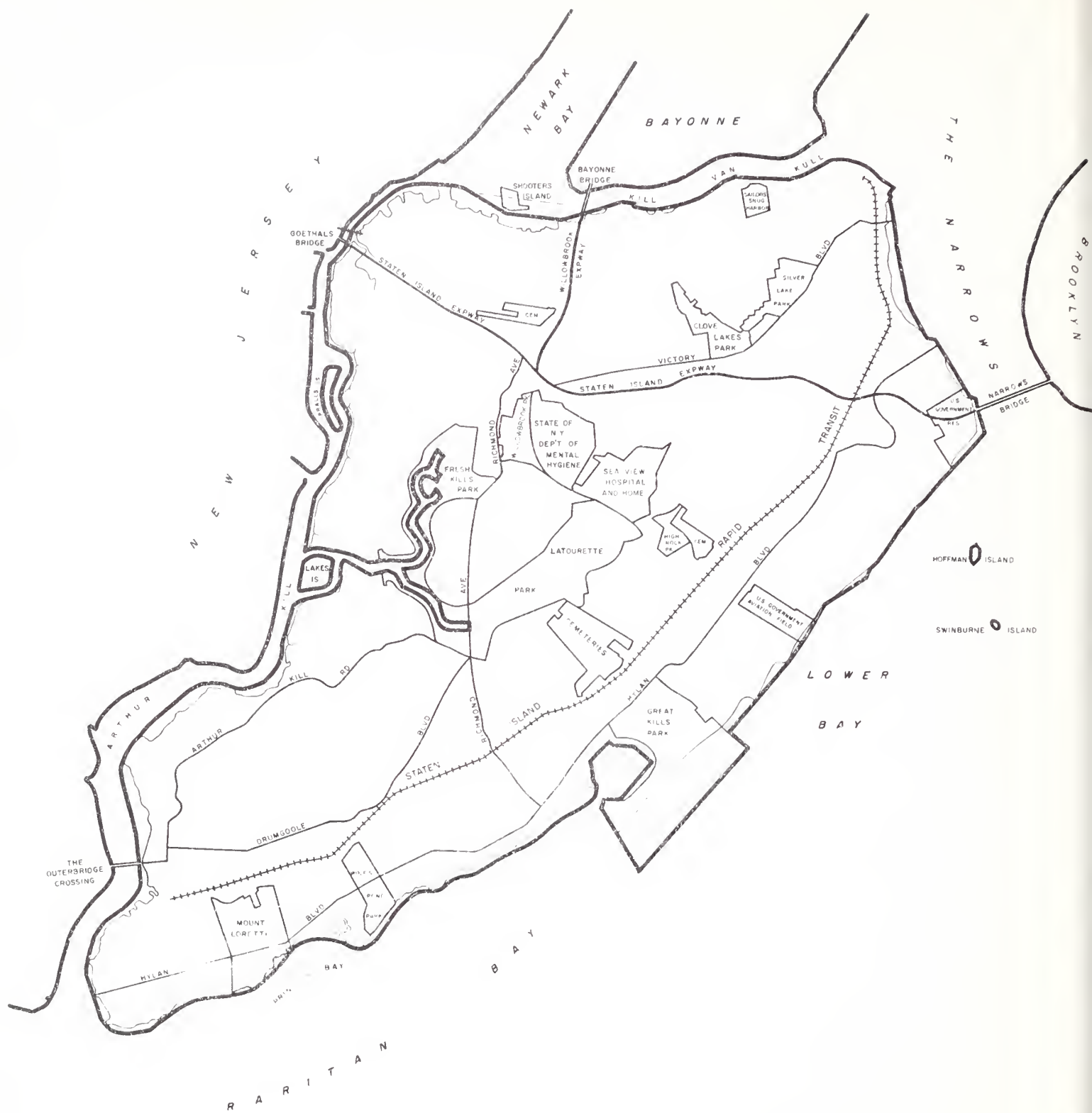
2. Staten Island must be handled as a special challenge. In the scale of things, the Staten Island development problem is not the single most important issue confronting the City of New York at this time. It cannot be assigned unlimited fiscal and manpower resources, nor should it. If it is to be dealt with along with the City's other massive problems, it would have to be assigned a priority too low to be of any effective use. Therefore, we have looked upon this as a special challenge requiring more localized leadership and resources to insure its success. However, we wish to make clear that it is part of the City--subject to its overall development policies, not the preserve of current Staten Island residents.
3. Present land development activities on Staten Island are unsatisfactory. Unless adequate steps are taken soon, we shall see a repetition here of the same urban sprawl, urban neglect and despoliation of natural features that has characterized much of the newgrowth in other parts of the City and region.
4. Staten Island's undesirable growth phenomenon stems partially from the City's inability to establish adequate development controls and standards, and partially from the failure on the part of private builders to depart from the entrenched, monotonous methods of development and seek higher standards for site planning and construction. In both cases, Government and developer have been seriously handicapped by a unique combination of legal, historic and economic forces which must be dealt with forcefully if satisfactory solutions are to be found.
5. Finally, in the spirit of facing up to reality, we must recognize that the challenge confronting us on Staten Island is not one of conservation, but rather of reclamation. Staten Island is not virgin land about to make its debut as part of the urban scene. For the past 300 years the Island has been subject to sporadic settlement, land speculation, industrialization and incipient urbanization. Over the years the Island has been abused, neglected and ignored. It is an area where residential construction is flourishing and the job economy is sluggish. It is an area where curbstones trail through the underbrush to demarcate phantom streets that were carved out during a land boom of the '20s. It is an area where ghost piers and abandoned factories sit on the shores of Arthur Kill shrouded in the

pall of pollution caused by the active, heavy industries just across the way in New Jersey.

The natural features of the Island are among its major assets for providing a scale of residential amenity that has been by-passed, for the most part, in the rest of the City. Nowhere in New York City are there such breathtaking views as those afforded by the charming topography and lovely landscapes of the Island. However, much of its undeveloped acreage--especially in the southern part of the borough--is far from being pristine. It is often dominated by a secondary growth of shrubbery and trees which have been strangling in New Jersey's sulphurous westerlies, tortured by drought, and disfigured more recently by serious fires. Man's handiwork has not helped. Laced among the underbrush are discarded auto tires, disemboweled sofas, rusting bedsprings and the omnipresent "urban fallout"--beer cans and pop bottles. In many areas, once sparkling creeks and ponds have been doubly blighted by years of drought and decades of dumping.

It is apparent that in Staten Island we are not stepping in to save a redwood forest or to plan a new town in Arcadia. The challenges are tougher and more complex. We must "undo" before we can "do"--we must re-build even while we build. In many ways it is reminiscent of the task which another Staten Islander, Frederick Law Olmstead, undertook a century ago when he surveyed an uninspired rural area in Manhattan and set about to design Central Park--the first great urban "greenbelt."

And so, while we are basing our proposals on the realities of Staten Island, we refuse to become so pragmatic that we neglect our role as planners. True, we cannot entirely erase Staten Island's past and present and start with a clean slate, but we believe that its future can be profoundly affected by the imaginative, creative and courageous actions that are within our reach today.



# **STATEN ISLAND DEVELOPMENT STUDY** **DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING · CITY OF NEW YORK**

June, 1966

## II. S U M M A R Y   O F   R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

This report concerns itself with three simple questions:  
What has been happening in Staten Island over the past five years?  
What are the emerging opportunities and problems that require governmental action? And what actions can be instituted to meet these problems?

While the questions appear simple, the answers are not. Much post-census data are not available or easily gathered. Problems of development on Staten Island, like problems everywhere, are rarely black and white. There are no villains, no heroes--but a composite of complex social, political and economic forces in collision. Finally, recommendations for action must be flexible enough to withstand the constant changes and pressures brought about by these forces at work.

It should be clear, therefore, that the recommendations that are outlined in this chapter should be viewed in the context of the problems spelled out in greater detail in this report. They must be recognized as a framework for action and a beginning point upon which newer programs may be built.

### A. LAND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

1. The special nature of Staten Island's development needs and the opportunities presented here mandate the establishment of the Office of Staten Island Development Coordinator by the Mayor. The Coordinator, a high-ranking city official, would be empowered to coordinate the various city services to insure orderly development; serve as liaison to other governmental agencies and the builders; supervise urban renewal programs for Staten Island and recommend new ones; serve as expediter and arbiter in untangling and eliminating operational and administrative red-tape.
2. An orderly schedule of public improvements (sewers, street paving, schools, etc.) should be proposed so that property owners and developers will have a clearly defined understanding of where and when city services are to be extended.



3. On the basis of current public improvement programs and available facilities the City should encourage and expedite private development in the northern half of the Island (generally north of the Fresh Kills - Great Kills line). The problems of South Richmond are discussed later in this chapter.
4. The mapping or re-mapping of streets should also be programmed according to a schedule. Once programmed, any determination to withhold mapping action in the interests of sound future development should be permitted only if the rights of property owners are fully considered.
5. Wherever feasible, new maps should conform to the modern standards for residential development. This includes mapping curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs to inhibit through traffic, using less of the total area for streets, and respecting topographic conditions and natural features.
6. The sale of in rem land (City-owned tax lien properties) should be worked out to coincide with the land development timetable on Staten Island and to prevent land speculation.

City-owned land should not be auctioned:

- a. in unmapped areas;
  - b. where the land is substandard;
  - c. where natural desirable terrain features exist; such as streambeds, beaches, etc;
  - d. in areas which are being "land banked" for future improvements.
7. The City's Zoning Ordinance should be amended to permit planned unit development (cluster zoning). In addition, other zoning changes and use of zoning and mapping techniques--including subdivision regulations--should be evaluated and adapted to meet the special requirements of Staten Island development.

8. Legislative steps necessary to further a comprehensive program for Staten Island development include:
  - a. Passage of Local Law #32 which would withhold building permits on unmapped streets.
  - b. Passage of the Early Acquisition Law by the State Legislature. This would enable the City to move swiftly, as in the case of the Annadale-Huguenot Renewal Area, to acquire properties that might otherwise be developed to the detriment of good planning.
  - c. Passage in Albany of the "Right of First Refusal Law." This legislation would enable the City to have first opportunity to acquire tax-exempt holdings before they are offered for sale on the private market.
  - d. Passage of the State Law which would create a State Park Region within the City of New York.
  - e. Passage of the proposed "New Communities" section of the 1966 Federal Urban Development Act. Here, funds could be made available for loans to Public Land Development Agencies "to purchase open or predominantly undeveloped land in connection with the development of new neighborhoods, subdivisions or communities."

9. South Richmond Development

The special problems created by land holdings on unmapped or prescriptive streets (streets that gain official status through long public use), by development pressures, and by the lack of city services in this area calls for a program of action above and beyond those tools available to the City at this time.

Accordingly, it is urged that prompt consideration be given to the formation of a South Richmond Development Corporation--a quasi-public land development agency--which would be empowered to set up a revolving fund for the purpose of acquiring selected lands (or purchasing development rights), preparing modern subdivision plans subject to City approval, and re-selling land for private development. This indigenous development corporation would have the flexibility of action which the City lacks and would be directed by local civic, business and governmental officials.

10. Central Island Development

- a. Mapping and sale of in rem lands which meet appropriate land sale conditions should be expedited in this area generally between the S.I. Expressway and the Fresh Kills - Great Kills Park boundary.
- b. With necessary safeguards and contingent upon satisfactory subdivision plans, private sewage treatment plants could be considered here until the City's facilities could be made available.
- c. A broad development policy and generalized land use plan for the "Heartlands" area would provide a variety of commercial uses as a vital core of this area. On the western periphery, in the area currently being improved as part of the City's land-fill operations, the Commission would encourage this City land to be used for public educational, civic and cultural facilities. The northern and eastern sectors should be developed for residential use, with a variety of building types including some multiple dwellings.
- d. Every effort must be made to develop a drainage system on the marshy east shore that will protect existing development which was built below grade, and to use this system as a positive physical asset.

11. Northern Island Development

Some of the older established areas in the northern part of the Island are in need of rehabilitation, renewal and conservation programs. It is recommended that Staten Island receive a pro rata share of the City's renewal funds--perhaps \$1 to \$1.5 million annually--to be used by the Coordinator for improvement projects. This approach will afford maximum flexibility and insure more rapid disposition of these programs.

B. TRANSPORTATION

1. Highways

- a. Richmond Parkway is a matter now under consideration by the Transportation Council. The Commission has urged that it be developed to expressway standards and that

it be better routed in the northern section to serve the growing "Heartlands" area and to provide an efficient link to the Bayonne Bridge.

- b. If Richmond Parkway is limited to passenger vehicles there is need for the West Shore Expressway.
- c. The Commission recommends against acquisition of land below Great Kills Park for the purposes of developing the Shore Front Drive continuation. There is no need for a road facility here at this time and a careful study should be made to determine the possible detrimental impact of a shorefront highway on the area's recreational and development potential.
- d. To adequately handle north-south traffic below Great Kills Park, a major improvement of Hyland Boulevard, in a manner similar to that of Queens Boulevard, is desirable.
- e. The proposed continuation of the Shore Front Drive northeast through the Stapleton area and westward to the Goethals Bridge seems to be a desirable improvement. This route should be studied for feasibility.

## 2. Transit

Steps should be taken to finance the modernization of the Staten Island Rapid Transit line to meet growing passenger loads. On a longer-range basis, studies should get under way toward the eventual linking of the SIRT directly to Manhattan via the Bayonne Peninsula or other possible routes.

## 3. Bus Facilities

The Commission recommends a program for improved express bus service across the Narrows Bridge connecting with improved subway service in Brooklyn. Better coordination of bus service with the SIRT in South Richmond is also needed.

## 4. General Aviation Field

A commercial airport to serve light aircraft would be an

asset to Staten Island. Miller Field might be considered for this use temporarily until a more suitable site is developed in or near the proposed Industrial Park in Mariner's Harbor.

C. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Efforts to attract new industries to Staten Island should be undertaken by the City's Industrial Development Corporation and the newly established Public Development Corporation. Sections of the proposed Staten Island Industrial Park in Mariner's Harbor are located on high ground and could be advanced for early development.
2. The City should support efforts to rehabilitate Stapleton piers for modern cargo handling.
3. The Port of New York Authority should be asked to explore the northwest shorefront as a possible area for expanded port activity on Staten Island.

D. INSTITUTIONS

1. The 240-acre site of the proposed State Mental Health Hospital near South Beach is much too large for current plans for this facility. The City should meet immediately to arrange a possible acquisition or "land swap" with the State so that all or a large section of this valuable tract could be used for more desirable development.
2. The City should also take steps to acquire the 180-acre Miller Army Airfield, just south of the Mental Health Hospital site, which is no longer being used intensively by the Defense Department. This shorefront tract has exceptionally attractive long-range development potentialities.
3. A new Richmond College, part of the City University system, is scheduled to be opened in 1969. In addition, the Staten Island Community College will have to expand. The



Commission believes there are a number of choice sites for this college including the City-owned land in the "Heart-lands", Miller Field and the State Mental Hospital site.

E. RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. The Greenbelt concept should be preserved and expanded in new development opportunities. Green walkways, scenic easements, fenways (publicly-protected streams), and strip parks should branch out from large park areas into the developing residential complexes.
2. The possibility of conserving some lands in their natural or reclaimed state should be explored. Expert judgments are required here to determine the extent and feasibility of conservation measures on the Island.
3. A clarification of the State Bond Issue funds is called for to insure that acquisition money is available for major Staten Island parks such as Conference House Park Extension.
4. A program for local parks in newly developing areas is required to insure that playgrounds, ballfields and other local recreational facilities are not by-passed in the development rush.
5. The south shore beachfront should be studied as a possible new park area.
6. A program of tree planting and reforestation should get under way to replace burned and dying trees.
7. A clean-up campaign of the wooded areas could be launched this summer as a possible job opportunity program.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

1. Request Congress to authorize appropriation of funds for beach erosion and hurricane protection along the south shore as recommended by the Corps of Engineers. Below Great Kills Park, this should be done separately from the proposed Shore Front Drive.

2. Review entire sewage treatment program in relation to development demands. Accelerate plant construction wherever necessary and feasible.
3. Complete drainage plan for marshland areas to achieve natural run-off where possible.
4. Accelerate inter-state air pollution controls with special attention to pollution and odors stemming from New Jersey industries.
5. Develop unified standards and controls for private temporary sewage treatment facilities.



Slender Verrazano-Narrows Bridge has focused Citywide and regional attention on Staten Island, quickened borough's metabolism, spurred development and growth. Population forecasts for the Island for 1970 range upwards from 300,000, a projected increase for the 1960's -- the decade of the Bridge -- three times that recorded from 1950-60.

III. TRENDS INFLUENCING  
STATEN ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

It has been noted that the development problems confronting the City in Staten Island are the result of historic, legal, economic and social pressures which have been brought to a boil in the past few years with the advent of "The Bridge." The fact that the Verrazano Bridge now provides a convenient vehicular link to the "mainland" of the City has already had profound effects upon the metabolism of Staten Island.

Population  
Shifts

Noticeable increase in the growth rate of the Island's population is the major indicator of this quickening pulse. In the six years that have elapsed since the last census, for example, the Island's population growth has exceeded that of the entire 1950-60 decade by more than 40 percent, bringing the current population of Staten Island to estimates upwards of 265,000. The population should exceed 300,000 by 1970 and 500,000 by 1985, if the present rate of growth continues.

As might be predicted, the completion of the bridge has stimulated a large in-migration of families--the bulk of whom apparently are moving from Brooklyn. A check of new enrollments in the public schools on Staten Island and the proliferation of "K" license plates in the local parking areas corroborate the Brooklyn-Richmond migration trend.

The new families of Staten Island are overwhelmingly middle-class like the resident population of the Island. The 1960 Census indicated that Staten Islanders' incomes averaged about 10 percent more than the City-wide median. And proportionately, there were fewer low-income and upper-income families here than in the City as a whole.

The  
Housing  
Market

Since 1960, the further entrenchment of the middle-income pattern is reflected in the housing market. Housing in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range accounted for two-thirds of the total units sold in the first four years of this decade. With residential construction moving along briskly

NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION  
BY BUILDING TYPE  
RICHMOND

1960 - 1965.

| Year*       | 1-Family | 2-Family | 3 or More | Total  |
|-------------|----------|----------|-----------|--------|
| 1960-61     | na       | na       | na        | 2,473  |
| 1961-62     | 1,170    | 796      | 333       | 2,299  |
| 1962-63     | 1,119    | 584      | 666       | 2,369  |
| 1963-64     | 994      | 736      | 796       | 2,526  |
| 1964-65     | 1,083    | 599      | 917       | 2,599  |
| Grand Total |          |          |           | 12,266 |

\*July 1 - June 30 na - not available

Source: Sanborn Map Company

at the rate of 2,400 units a year since 1960, about 65 percent of this annual total has been accounted for by one- and two-family dwellings to satisfy the public's yearning for a patch of green lawn and a private backyard.

While apartment house construction has accelerated during the past few years, the private multiple dwelling market has been comparatively sluggish. The Federal Housing Administration estimates that the vacancy rate in rental housing of all types is about 3.1 percent in Richmond compared to 2.2 percent in Brooklyn and 1.8 percent in The Bronx. The newer privately financed apartment houses in Staten Island are experiencing greater rental difficulties and, according to the FHA, are offering generous concessions to maintain a 93 percent occupancy rate.

Public  
Housing

Multiple dwellings statistics in the past five years might also be deceptive unless one recognizes that about 40 percent of the total units constructed during this period was accounted for by public housing projects. The public housing program produced a total of 1,816 units during this time, but at present no new units are contemplated. Here, too, there are renting difficulties. The overall rate of voluntary movements of tenants out of all types of public housing in Richmond is 11.1 percent compared

# ESTIMATED SALES OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES BY PRICE RANGE

1964 - 1970 \*

|                | Richmond              | Bronx | Brooklyn | Queens | Manhattan | Nassau | Rockland | Suffolk | Westchester |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|---------|-------------|
|                | (Percentage of Total) |       |          |        |           |        |          |         |             |
| Under \$20,000 | 19%                   | 55%   | 50%      | 44%    | -         | 22%    | 26%      | 46%     | 13%         |
| \$20-24.9      | 41                    | 35    | 35       | 30     | -         | 26     | 30       | 27      | 28          |
| \$25-29.5      | 25                    | 5     | 10       | 13     | -         | 26     | 20       | 13      | 21          |
| \$30 +         | 15                    | 5     | 5        | 13     | -         | 26     | 24       | 14      | 38          |
| Total          | 100%                  | 100%  | 100%     | 100%   | -         | 100%   | 100%     | 100%    | 100%        |

# COST BREAKDOWN, ONE- AND TWO-FAMILY HOUSES BUILT IN STATEN ISLAND

1960 - 1964 \*

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Under \$20,000 | 20%  |
| \$20-25,000    | 41%  |
| \$25-30,000    | 25%  |
| \$30,000 +     | 14%  |
| Total          | 100% |

\*Source: F.H.A.--Analysis of the New York, New York Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area,  
January, 1966.



to a voluntary turnover rate of 5.2 for the City as a whole. The recently completed West Brighton project is experiencing the highest turnover rate in the City--13.7 percent.

The dramatically higher turnover rates in public housing in Richmond point to two key factors that appear to present barriers to larger scale low-income residency in the borough at this time: the lack of cheap, fast and direct mass transportation facilities to centers of employment in other parts of the City and the paucity of local job opportunities in Richmond.

### Employment

The immediate outlook for greatly expanded employment opportunities is not optimistic. As a Chamber of Commerce official commented recently about the industrial climate, "It's a dismal picture." Despite its large tracts of available land for industrial development, the Island has lost about 1,000 manufacturing jobs since 1960. Of the Island's 8,300 blue collar workers, more than 37 percent are employed in the Island's four long-standing industrial plants--Proctor and Gamble in Port Ivory, U. S. Gypsum in New Brighton, Nassau Smelting and Refining in Tottenville, and S. S. White Company in Prince's Bay.

The general employment prognosis is less pessimistic, but the Island's economy has been able to produce only 5 percent more jobs in the past five years while the population has increased by about 20 percent. Most of the employment gains were in jobs related to the population growth--retail and wholesale, service occupations, and finance, insurance, and real estate.

The gap between local job opportunities and population growth augurs the continuing prospect of a commuter borough. About half the Island's work force commuted to jobs outside of Richmond, according to the 1960 Census. About one-third of the commuters worked in Manhattan, with Brooklyn and New Jersey attracting most of the balance. New Jersey provided jobs for only six percent of the working Staten Islanders. It is estimated that since the beginning of the decade, the percentage of Richmond residents working off-Island has increased.

## Economic Outlook

With the exception of some small manufacturing firms in the apparel and related fields, there has been little or no new industry moving to the Island. There are indications, however, that improved trucking access created by the bridge links will excite interest in the Island as a distribution center. It is hoped that the huge new Goodrich tire warehouse in Mariner's Harbor will augur further activity of this nature in Richmond.

Another hopeful sign is the revived interest in the Stapleton piers. For the first time in ten years Piers 12 and 13 are being put to use again. Contracts have been signed with the City to develop a modern container ship cargo handling facility.

## Retail Sales

The most active economic growth on the Island is in the area of retail sales. In an analysis of 1958 sales, Richmond residents reportedly spent \$58,000,000 on retail purchases other than food and staples in Richmond. This represented slightly more than half of the total estimated purchasing power for these purposes at that time--the balance being spent off the Island. By 1970, it is estimated that sales in Richmond in these categories will soar to approximately \$98.5 million, or about 80 percent of the total purchasing power.

The increased percentage of on-island expenditures is reflected in the burgeoning retail shopping centers which are in planning or already in operation and which cater to the auto-oriented Staten Islander. There is also an indication that the recently approved New Jersey sales tax will further discourage off-island shopping. New shopping complexes in Dongan Hills, New Dorp, and the "Heartlands" area (New Springville) are expected to capture a substantial proportion of the new retail business.

## Transporta- tion

The modern shopping center is a symbol of the arrival of the "auto age" in Staten Island. While experiencing a population increase which has averaged about 3 percent annually, Staten Island's vehicular explosion is marked by a 5 percent annual increase in motor vehicles. The Island is now a community on wheels and is living through all the dilemmas that feed upon automobile dependency--congestion on older streets in the more densely developed

northern areas; lack of adequate parking space; the proliferation of "gasoline alleys" along major thoroughfares such as Hyman Boulevard; and of course, the debates as to where the next highway shall go.

The impact of the Verrazano Bridge and the Staten Island Expressway has been pronounced and immediate in this respect. In its first year of operation, the bridge handled 17.1 million vehicles, which was almost double the forecasts. According to the Port of New York Authority, about 7.1 million of these vehicles had previously used the Hudson River tunnels or the Upper Bay ferries. The other ten million vehicles represented newly-generated traffic to and from Staten Island, which also points up its new potential as a distribution center.

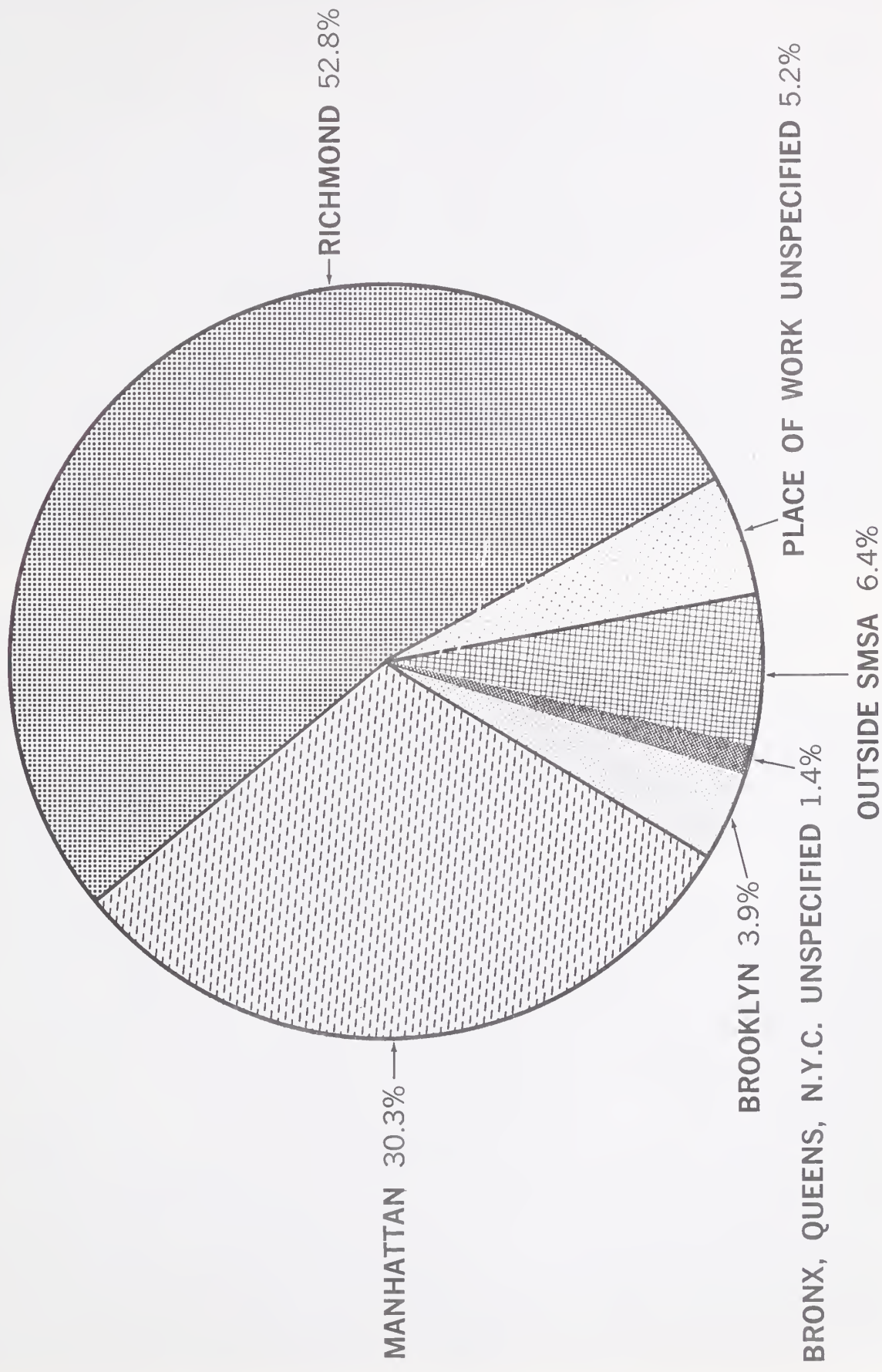
NUMBER OF AUTOS  
PER HOUSING UNIT  
RICHMOND AND NEW YORK CITY

1960

|                        | Occupied Housing Units |         |               |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------|---------------|
|                        | Richmond               |         | New York City |
|                        | Number                 | Percent | Percent       |
| Occupied housing units | 61,731                 | 100.0   | 100.0         |
| At least one auto      | 46,624                 | 75.5    | 42.5          |
| 1 auto                 | 39,623                 | 64.2    | 38.3          |
| 2 autos                | 6,353                  | 10.3    | 3.4           |
| 3 or more autos        | 648                    | 1.0     | 0.7           |
| No auto                | 15,107                 | 24.5    | 57.5          |

Source: 1960 U.S. Census of Population and Housing

# PLACE OF WORK OF RICHMOND LABOR FORCE, 1960







Study in contrasts: New retail activity accounts for borough's greatest economic growth and potential with several major new shopping complexes underway or proposed, including bustling Korvette center in New Springville on Richmond Avenue in Heartlands area (above). Another hopeful sign is revived interest in dilapidated Stapleton piers (below) where modern containership facility is slated for development.







Community on wheels: Plague of assorted traffic hazards afflict Staten Island motorist, from congestion on older streets to stray piglet and sow with wanderlust on rural lanes.



- 16 -  
In spite of growing dependence upon the motor vehicle, Staten Islanders have also turned to the Staten Island Rapid Transit in increasing numbers as part of their journey-to-work. The SIRT, which is operated by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad with antique cars, has shown a better than 16 percent increase in revenue passengers since 1959. The opening of the bridge resulted in a temporary setback to passenger loads, but all indications point to continuing increase in the line's passenger traffic.

Ferry transportation, once the life-line of the Island, has been altered radically by the Narrows Bridge. The 69th Street Brooklyn Ferry has been discontinued with the construction of the Verrazano span forcing about 2.6 million former foot passengers to find other means (bus and auto, primarily) for commutation. An additional 3.1 million passengers using the Whithall Ferry also changed their travelling mode during the year ending November 1965.

Staten Island's access to air transportation has all but disappeared. The once active Miller Field is now less intensively used for training activities by the Defense Department, and a new shopping center is rising on the site of the private air field located in the "Heartlands" (New Springville) site.

## Institutions

The waning use of Miller Field points up a general situation created by changing needs and demands for institutional facilities on the island. Richmond's comparatively remote location, its available acreage, and its sylvan attributes have made it an attractive lure for institutional uses over the years. At present, some 42 percent of the assessed valuation of the Island is tax exempt--a somewhat striking index to the huge non-profit holdings in the borough.

Despite their numbers, few of the larger institutions serve local needs. Most are regionally oriented. When originally organized, some of the older institutions were more concerned with obtaining lands in large quantities than they were with securing locations appropriate to the services rendered. Further, these institutions often were organized to perform functions which

have radically changed or are no longer needed. Typical of this is Seaview Hospital and Home located on a vast 380-acre tract. Originally built as a tuberculosis hospital it is now a poorly-located geriatric hospital with the farm colony structures serving as annex facilities.

Other installations, including the Coast Guard Station near the ferry terminals, and the State Mental Health Hospital site in South Beach, have also been affected by new operating approaches or administrative consolidation which negate the need for all or most of their land holdings. In recent years, privately-owned non-profit properties have been offered for sale on the private market. In the case of the High Rock Camp, the City had to step in to acquire it as a park to prevent this valuable tract of natural wooded land from being sold for development. More recently new concerns have arisen that the nearby Boy Scout Camp and Camp Kaufman may also be on the selling block.

#### Recreation

The public pressures that developed in response to the proposed sale of High Rock brought to the fore the "Greenbelt" concept that has been asserted again vigorously in efforts to re-route the proposed Richmond Parkway. The "Greenbelt" idea has been advanced by public-spirited local residents who have been pressing for the conservation of wooded and green areas along the hilly spine that runs north and south through the center of the borough. It represents not only a pressure for the specific physical improvement of the Island, but also has helped focus widespread attention upon its overall recreational assets and possibilities. These assets include the Island's numerous natural areas--waterways and wooded stands--as well as areas worthy of preservation for their historical values--Richmond town, Conference House Park and Amboy Road.

#### Environmental Problems

These recreational assets, however, are threatened by man-made and natural forces that require remedial action. Just a stone's throw from New Jersey at the base of the Hudson River and New York Harbor, Staten Island has become the unwilling victim of pollution fallout from the shores and waterways of its neighbors. New Jersey industrial works exhale noxious vapors which move over the Island's western shore and dump manufacturing wastes into intervening bodies of water both to the west and north. The





Underbrush laced with bedsprings, cartons, plumbing fixtures, pop bottles and the charred rubble of what once was a house grimly testify to man's hand in the despoliation of his environment.



waters moving through the adjacent Narrows are contaminated by sewage from the sections of Brooklyn and Queens not yet serviced by treatment plants. And the Island's eastern face suffers the battering of wind and sea, experiencing both beach erosion and hurricane damage.

Recently action has been initiated on these problems. A 1964 Army Corps of Engineers' study examined the economic feasibility of hurricane protection and beach erosion control. The report outlined the advisability of hurricane protection between Graham Beach and Oakwood Beach, at Great Kills and at Tottenville Beach. It also recommended beach erosion work between Graham Beach and Great Kills Park, between Arbutus Lake and Sequine Point, and at Tottenville Beach. In general, their plan provided for beach fill, dunes, levees, interior drainage facilities and groin construction in the above areas. Funds were committed by the Department of Public Works to finance the Great Kills Project.

Allocations of State and Federal funds have enabled the City to move ahead with water pollution control projects to benefit the Island. The Newtown Creek Pollution Control Plant will improve the quality of water passing through the Narrows. Plans are being prepared for Port Richmond, North River, Oakwood Beach, Red Hook and Tottenville Projects, all of which will contribute to improvement of the waters in the Upper and Lower New York Bays and Raritan Bay. The completion of these projects which is many years away cost as much as \$389 million; moreover, there is no clear indication that the program will be sufficient to control water pollution. But at least there are funds, technical skills and a coordinating agency equipped to deal with the problem.

Other control measures were agreed upon during the 1965 Interstate Hudson River Conference: full secondary treatment of wastes on the New Jersey shore by no later than the end of 1968; chlorination of industrial wastes in the Upper Harbor area by 1967; a continuous monitoring system of the water in Arthur Kill to spot illegal discharges.

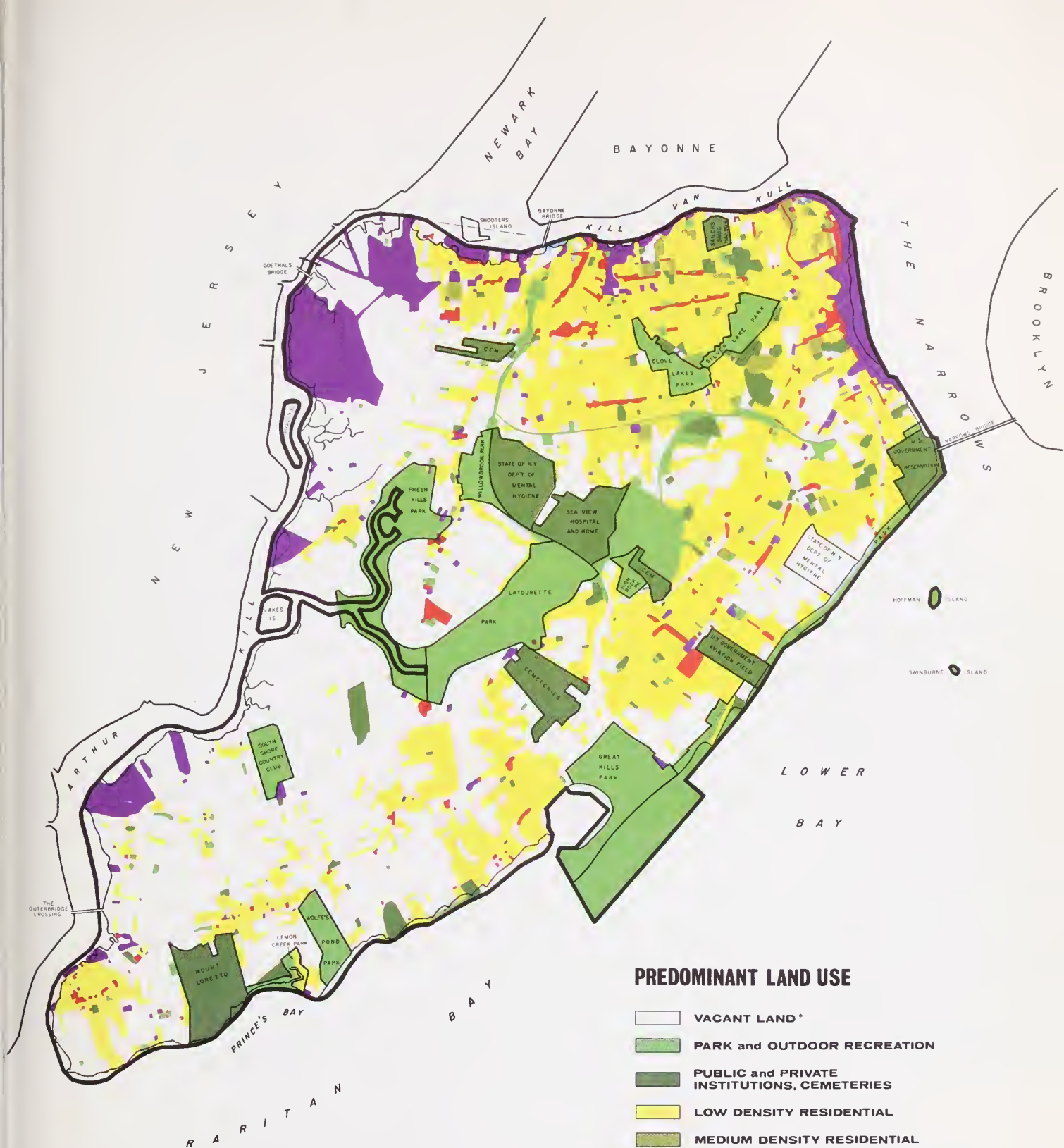


The Island's air pollution problem, largely an inter-State one, is more one of odor, occurring at unpredictable times, than of a health hazard. A health problem arises mainly during times of profoundly stable air conditions, technically known as thermal inversions. This is a region-wide threat and will be handled in that context. Authoritative judgments on the subject, coming from the New York City Department of Air Pollution Control and the Interstate Sanitation Commission both state that the air on Staten Island is superior to that of Manhattan. Limited steps have been taken by the Interstate Sanitation Commission to correct the invasion of sulphurous odors from New Jersey. However, it is generally felt that the air pollution will not be a controlling determinant of land development policy on the Island.

#### Citizen Awareness

Citizens of the Island are becoming more and more vocal and insistent that their borough be preserved from these environmental threats and that a level of high residential amenity be maintained for the Island. Continuing intensive efforts to preserve and expand the Greenbelt demonstrated through borough-wide group action and locally generated activities are symbolic of this burgeoning civic conscience.

New York's one-time insular possession across the Narrows has become very much a vital part of the City. Its tempo is changing. It has become restive and articulate about its needs. And it has served notice that it will not settle for second best solutions.





#### IV. LAND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The fact that Staten Island represents the last major land resource within the City is a primary factor in shaping its development characteristics. While other phenomena--most of which are described in this report--contribute to the Island's development pattern, the critical one is the availability of vacant land reasonably close to the Central City.

As has been noted, the linking of Staten Island to the City's "mainland" has stimulated development and has caused land prices to soar. While it is debatable whether Richmond is yet experiencing a bona-fide building boom, there is no question that there is a speculative one in the pricing of acreage. In many areas of Staten Island vacant land prices have risen dramatically from pennies a square foot to \$1 - \$2 a square foot in less than a decade. As one Staten Island developer said recently, "I do not care where the land is located in Richmond, today it is worth a minimum of \$30,000 an acre regardless of its condition."

The high cost of land coupled with the housing market demand and building practices have been responsible in large measure for a fairly stereotyped development pattern. Although most of the vacant land on the Island is zoned R3-2 (a residential zoning permitting a maximum of 25 dwelling units per acre and a variety of housing types), the preponderance of new housing has been one-family dwellings on 40-foot frontages and one- and two-family row or semi-attached housing.

Another important factor which has colored the Island's development picture is the large City-owned land holdings mostly resulting from tax lien foreclosures over the years. By the end of World War II, it was estimated that the City owned as much as one third of the Island. While its holdings of vacant undeveloped land have shrunk considerably as a result of public auction sales of these properties, the City still holds about 6,500 gross acres, which represent a major control in determining the future course of development. This is particularly relevant in the South Richmond area (the section south of Great Kills Park on the east and Fresh Kills on the west) where the City owns about 45 percent of the remaining 8,300 acres of vacant land.





Phantom street trailing off into the underbrush, a legacy of the land boom of the 1920's that fizzled in the depression, has nonetheless stamped a lasting imprint on property lines -- inhibiting modern street mapping required for sound residential development.



Still another consideration which affects the nature of land development is the large number of small land holdings in the undeveloped portions of the Island. The scattered, small parcels that dot the Island pose difficulties in creating subdivisions and mapping changes that would do justice to modern residential standards and still respect property rights of individual owners.

## MAPPING

About 45 years ago a proposal was formulated to construct a tunnel providing Staten Island with its first direct rail link to Brooklyn and the remainder of the City. In anticipation of the effects of the tunnel, real estate promoters purchased large tracts of vacant land throughout southern Richmond. Subdivision and circulation maps were filed with the Borough President and the Board of Estimate. In some instances, rudimentary streets were laid out, utilities planned, and fire hydrants installed. Farms were subdivided into building lots, land costs soared and builders raced one another to prepare for construction.

The tunnel, of course, never materialized. The boom fizzled. The depression took hold and most all the grandiose schemes for residential development of the generally vacant southern part of the Island were abandoned. As the years passed, roads and foundations were masked and covered by shrubbery. Fireplugs soon stood isolated in swaying fields of grass.

Today we are reaping the whirlwind of premature subdivision. Though only a random fireplug may stand as physical evidence of the boom that fizzled, the southern vacant section of Richmond is laced with a phantom street system that has stamped a lasting imprint upon property lines and the rights of owners to have access to street frontages. Any procedures to establish official maps and grades, therefore, must either respect these rights or face the consequences of City acquisition of these lands, which can be costly, and become complicated by legal and administrative bottlenecks.

To date, about two-thirds of the total Island has been officially mapped. Where mapping has been recently approved some efforts have been made to establish more modern street layouts and to reduce the percentage of land in streets. However, because of the problems noted above, this has not been very successful. One of the more serious consequences of conformity to the old grid pattern is the excessive amount of the total land area which is placed in streets (over 30 percent). This is wasteful and robs residential areas of their tranquility and the protection from heavy traffic that can be afforded by curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs, and other modern mapping techniques designed to maximize residential amenity. In addition, about 10 percent more land can either be returned to the tax rolls or put to more desirable public use under these alternative mapping patterns.

Were there either sufficient revenues or more time, present patterns might gradually be altered through the requisite expenditure and litigation. However, land has been rising in value; so have tax assessments. Many owners and builders do not want to wait longer to develop their land.

Some development has proceeded either because of the necessity to honor the heritage of phantom streets or because of loopholes in the existing law. For example, present legislation makes it mandatory for the Buildings Department to issue building permits on unmapped streets if submitted plans are otherwise acceptable. Then, paradoxically, under Section 36 of the General City Law, the Department must refuse to issue Certificates of Occupancy for such structures. However, the builder has recourse to certain alternatives: he can appeal to the Board of Standards and Appeals for his Certificate of Occupancy (which is usually granted) or settle for illegal occupancy. As of May 1, 1966, there were 1,130 illegally occupied structures reported in Staten Island, with at least 200 resulting from the Section 36 paradox.

Another alternative has been to secure legal occupancy by asking the City for a change in the mapping status of the old subdivision street from unmapped to prescriptive which is a legal equivalent to being officially mapped. In recent rulings, some courts have upheld the prescriptive nature of these older streets, and thus, in effect, the legality of the construction along them.

It was these mapping dilemmas and the ever-mounting sense of time running out that led the Planning Commission early in 1962 to recommend that the open land provisions of the Urban Renewal legislation be employed in attempting to re-map and re-plat the

Annadale-Huguenot Area.

This proposal for more massive action to meet Staten Island's development needs was first acted upon in April 1963. Since then it has been frustrated by controversy, fears, misunderstandings and official procrastination. There now appears to be genuine commitment at this point to proceed forthwith to develop a renewal plan for the Annadale-Huguenot Area under Article 15 of the General Municipal Law without resorting to Federal renewal aids which might delay the matter further.

More recently, in an effort to deal with scattered development, the Planning Commission has recommended passage of legislation which would bar the Buildings Department from issuing a building permit for structures not having access to a mapped street. This would essentially mark a return to the mapping control possessed by the City until 1963 when the General City Law was amended at the behest of the Staten Island builders. To date, Staten Island builders remain unyielding in their opposition to this proposed legislation, and in the absence of a clear-cut City policy on land development, it would appear that this resistance will continue unabated.

The physical frontages and location of plats are not the only aspects of mapping which have important implications on Staten Island. A key factor in official mapping is the establishment of grades so that adequate drainage systems can be provided. Here, too, the consequences of premature, scattered development have resulted in serious hardships to homeowners and developers.

In the area near South Beach, for example, hundreds of expensive new homes, built on the basis of an "educated guess" as to grades, now find themselves threatened with inundation as the adjacent State Mental Hospital begins to build roads and storm sewers according to official grades which are several feet above the first floor of these homes. The need for drainage plans that respect the topography of the area--and for enforcement of these systems--was dramatized with the recent deaths of two Richmond youngsters who drowned in a "pond" created by a developer's bulldozers which had blocked a natural watercourse.



Premature development which ignores natural drainage system can result in ponding -- a menace to youngsters as well as a serious hardship to homeowners and developers.





Solving these intricate problems involved in providing adequate mapping and drainage systems for development on the Island remains a key issue. Continuing remedial actions must recognize both the rights of individual owners as well as the community's right to an amenable environment.

## ZONING

In preparing the current zoning resolution for the City, the Plannin Commission and its consultants gave great emphasis to the needs of Staten Island, recognizing that it was only half developed and that it contained more than half of all the vacant land in the City. It was the judgment then that the Island was "overzoned"--that is, its zoned capacity for residential development under the old resolution would permit the entire population of the City to live in Richmond.

In pruning zoned capacities in the new resolution, there was a realistic recognition that the Island would grow. At present, the Island's residential zoning as mapped, would allow for some 900,000 residents. This, it is estimated, should satisfy Staten Island's growth needs through the end of this century.

Zoning problems that have emerged, however, result more from how development has proceeded within the zoning envelope, rather than from overly restrictive ceilings. In zoning the vacant residential lands, most of these areas were given a blanket R3-2 designation. This could permit a great deal of flexibility in building types and generally conform to the densities which were considered to be realistic for the Island.

As noted in the preceding section of this report, the diversification failed to materialize. One- and two-family houses often characterized by critics as "cracker box variety" or "ticky-tacky" housing, became the dominant architectural expression. The grid street system and existing side-yard and rear yard zoning requirements have helped sustain the unrelieved phalanxes of new development which have been marching relentlessly southward and establishing beachheads in scattered spots throughout the Island. The consequences of this type of development are not measured merely in terms of esthetics. More often as not today's "ticky-tacky" housing becomes tomorrow's





Look-alike housing laid out row upon row dominates new development pattern on grid streets. Special zoning provisions may be warranted to stimulate more flexible and attractive design, greater variety of housing type and density.



In many areas of the Island, where development pressures have been mounting, builders have been confronted with the twin dilemma of not having convenient existing major collector sewers of sufficient capacity nearby, or of having a subsoil condition which will make septic tanks uneconomical or unacceptable to meet the Department of Health standards. In these cases, some developers have requested permission to build private pumping stations which carry sanitary waste into the nearest City sewer. Where this has proved infeasible, some larger developments may install private sewage treatment facilities subject to approvals by the Department of Health, the Department of Public Works and the City Planning Commission. The first such private treatment plant was recently approved by the Commission, subject to carefully drawn controls to protect the health and welfare of the residents and the interests of sound land development.

The operator of the private treatment plant is required to post a ten-year bond to insure proper maintenance and operation until the City installs its own sewerage facilities. The City has the option to call for the discontinuance of the plant at any time. Accordingly, each of these requests must be weighed carefully within the context of the City's sewer development program and the resources available to complete or accelerate such development.

#### CITY-OWNED LAND SALES

Basic to evolving comprehensive and coordinated development strategy for Staten Island is the necessity to establish firm public policy on the disposition of publicly-owned land. Past practices of the City have allowed the sale of such land irrespective of its suitability for development, or its effects upon the market. The indiscriminate sale of City-owned land can defeat many overall planning proposals and permit scattered development, which inevitably comes on the heels of such sales.

Aside from curtailing potential planning opportunities, the City's sales policies seem also to be contributing to the appreciation of land values and ultimately to land speculation.

Cognizant of these trends and practices, the Board of Estimate in January 1966 halted the sale of most land on Staten Island until a review of the City's sales policy could be effected. It also expressed its awareness of the need for an overall review of Staten Island land policy. The Island's newspaper, The Advance, in

Just as Staten Island represents special problems in other aspects of its development, so it appears to warrant special zoning considerations to spur more attractive residential construction and to provide greater variety to the type and density of new housing being offered.

#### PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

The provision of public improvements--highways, sewers, street lighting, schools, libraries, etc.--is a critical factor in the pace and the location of new development on the Island. The Capital Budget allocations for Staten Island since 1960 show a decided increase in the proportion of the budgets assigned to serve Staten Island. At the beginning of the decade, about \$20 million, or 5.7 percent of the total budget, was earmarked for Staten Island projects. In the 1966-67 Capital Budget, \$50 million, representing 7.4 percent of the budget was allocated to Richmond. It would appear that the budget is moving toward an equitable ratio between the Island's population (about 3.5 percent of the total City) and its land area (about 20 percent of the City).

The development of adequate sewerage and sewage treatment facilities is perhaps the most costly and complex of the City's public improvement programs in Staten Island. It is estimated that completion of these facilities will cost about \$700,000,000--which would make this an extremely long-range program if the earlier pace of sewer construction were maintained.





At present only the northern and eastern sectors of the Island are served by sewers (from Mariners Harbor to St. George and around to Great Kills). Even within these areas there are many streets that are still unserved by sewers. In addition, much of the existing sewerage is either inadequate to handle additional loads or is obsolete and in poor repair.

The current plans of the Department of Public Works call for a series of large interceptor sewers to be built on the periphery of the Island close to the shoreline. The ultimate goal is to ring the Island with these sewers, connecting each into a system of sewage treatment plants. The interceptors would in turn be fed from the interior by a system of smaller lines.





### CITY OWNED LAND (LARGE TRACTS)

-  PARKS
-  OTHER CITY FACILITIES  
(EDUCATION, HEALTH, DOCKS)
-  VACANT-FRESH KILLS LAND FILL
-  OTHER VACANT TRACTS

SOURCE  
DEPTS. OF REAL ESTATE, PARKS, SANITATION, MARINE AND AVIATION

**STATEN ISLAND DEVELOPMENT STUDY**  
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING · CITY OF NEW YORK  
January, 1966

SCALE IN FEET  
0 20 40 60

commenting on this action said: "The best interests of Staten Island and New York City cannot be served by jumping aboard and actually abetting a runaway land boom. Orderly development is needed. We need land sales that will discourage speculators and still encourage builders who see in Staten Island something besides a piece of land on which to mass produce warrens for people."

A brief picture of past practices and trends in City land sales on the Island shows why such action was necessary.

Before 1950 the City's ability to foreclose on tax delinquent property was in a state of virtual chaos with thousands of such parcels in arrears and the City seemingly unable to collect. This was due in large part to the requirement that all owners, including partial ones, had to be served before a foreclosure could be undertaken. At that time a procedure was evolved under existing State law which allowed the City to proceed not against the owners but against the property itself (in rem=in the thing). Immediately tax foreclosures skyrocketed and delinquency was also reduced.

Beginning in the early 1950's, the City has been systematically disposing of surplus property through auction sales. The total amount realized by these sales in the past 13 years is \$237 million for the entire City, with the 1965 total of \$26,682,011 representing the third highest year's sales. The percentage of total sales represented by Staten Island is constantly increasing. Since the agency was organized in 1959 the Department of Real Estate conducts these public auctions of City-owned land.

VALUE OF CITY - OWNED LAND SOLD  
BY DEPARTMENT OF REAL ESTATE

1960 - 1965

| Year | Sales        |               | % Staten Island<br>of City Total |
|------|--------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
|      | City-Wide    | Staten Island |                                  |
| 1960 | \$36,466,507 | \$10,339,785  | 28                               |
| 1961 | 32,402,355   | 9,638,135     | 30                               |
| 1962 | 14,103,865   | 5,694,895     | 40                               |
| 1963 | 12,361,835   | 5,101,155     | 41                               |
| 1964 | 18,683,950   | 7,866,620     | 42                               |
| 1965 | 26,682,011   | 14,936,310    | 56                               |

Source: Department of Real Estate



Staten Island's contribution to the total sales of City-owned property sold at Department of Real Estate's auctions has increased dramatically over the past six years. In 1960, Staten Island lands accounted for 38 percent of the revenues received at these auctions. By 1965 that percentage had increased steadily to 56 percent, accounting for almost \$15,000,000.

The price per acre realized by such sales has reflected--and perhaps spurred--the land speculation that has dominated the Island's real estate market. At the December 14, 1965 auction, a 36.8-acre tract of swampy land in the Oakwood Beach section was sold for \$1,641,000 or slightly more than \$1 a square foot. At the November 1959 auction, a similar sized piece of swampy land of 33.3 acres immediately adjacent to this tract sold for \$99,500 or less than 7 cents a square foot. In six years the price skyrocketed 15 times. The City's tendency to sell land in large tracts has also favored the speculator rather than the small builder. Since the great tide of construction predicted years ago has not yet fully materialized, the City seems mainly to be contributing to a land price boom.

Some officials have maintained that the City's land auctions are a lucrative source of income to meet the City's critical need for revenue. However, some sobering facts indicate that these staggering income statistics do not necessarily represent cash on the barrel-head. Almost all of the large tracts sold on Staten Island are secured by purchase money mortgages, thus making the immediate actual returns to the City limited.

The present system of allowing mortgages up to two thirds of the total sales price additionally encourages speculation since the relatively low six percent interest which the City charges cannot be obtained from private sources for such purposes. The one percent monthly penalty charge for delinquent payments hardly discourages what has been stated by some as fairly extensive "slowness" in meeting these obligations.

The standard schedule of mortgages allowable is indicated in the sales brochure as follows:

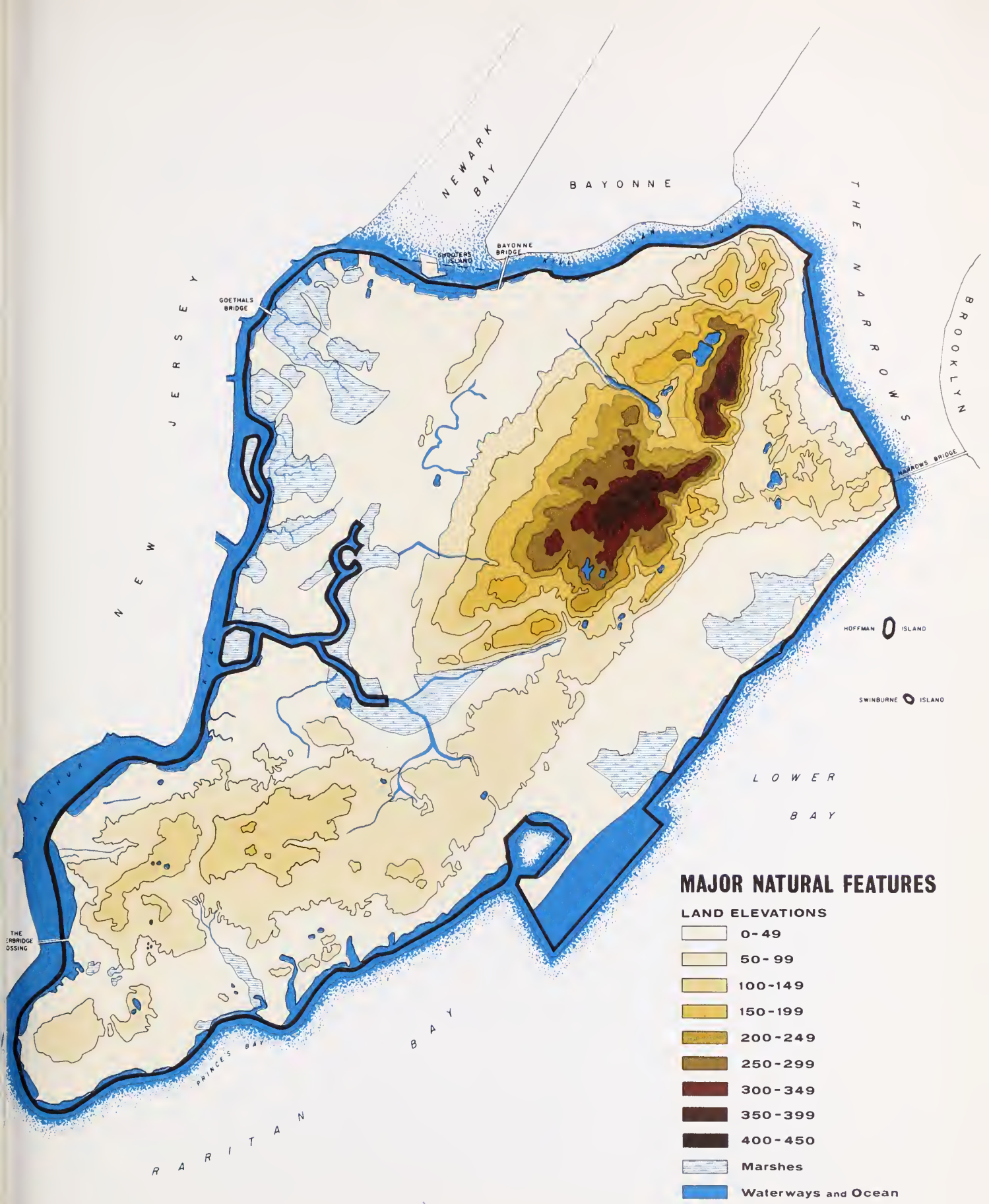
1. If the sale is for less than \$5,000 the total price is payable within 60 days.

2. If the purchase price is between \$5,000 and \$15,000 the minimum cash requirement is 50 percent.
3. If the purchase price is \$15,000 or over, the cash requirement is  $33 \frac{1}{3}$  percent of the purchase price.

The purchase money mortgage is payable in quarterly installments aggregating 11 percent per annum of the original sum. In practice, the mortgagor can take up to  $14\frac{1}{2}$  years to pay.

It has been pointed out by real estate brokers on Staten Island that because of financing advantages in City land sales, comparable private land sales in areas immediately adjacent to City-owned properties are less than those realized at City auctions.

It is clear then that present sales policies and their implications need to be examined and new practices consonant with the City's total development strategy for the Island developed.







V. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR IMPROVED LAND DEVELOPMENT

A. SOME BASIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

It has been noted early in this report that Staten Island must be handled as a special area of concern because it represents an unusual land planning challenge in an otherwise developed and highly congested metropolitan core.

Recognizing the unique opportunities which present themselves at this time, the City should be prepared to move swiftly and with conviction to chart a course that will spell a new era of development for Staten Island.

The City must be prepared to establish proper ground rules within which both public and private actions can function to the maximum benefit of the residents of Richmond and those who do business there. Sound development procedures, like good business practices, ultimately are more profitable to businessman and consumer alike.

In the case of Staten Island, the fundamental problems stem from lack of adequate development controls and development standards. The City has been unable to act consistently on the basis of a clear-cut set of criteria or a development policy. Accordingly, the following recommendations are set forth as guidelines in establishing the policy framework within which an improved development pattern can take shape:

1. Within the limitations of resources available, highest priorities for action should be accorded to programs to encourage high quality residential development to people of all income levels and the reservation of lands for recreational, conservation and necessary public improvements before they are committed to other types of development.
2. The City should seek to the highest degree possible to establish standards for residential development which will set a new tone and a new approach to urban and suburban living. Staten Island development presents exciting opportunities for innovative, rather than imitative techniques.

3. Although the Island's relative isolation and its comparatively weak job base present limitations at this time to the number of low-income families that could be attracted to live here, the City must guard against the economic or social stratification of the Island. Just as Staten Island presents interesting possibilities for new concepts in physical development, so it offers us the chance to create a climate to minimize social tensions and to deal intelligently and sensitively with problems that have proved vexing in other areas of the City. The City's open housing policies should have special relevance in Staten Island. Similarly, strenuous efforts must be made to encourage the expansion of the Island's job market through new industrial and commercial activity. In its fullest sense, Staten Island should be New York's frontier of opportunity.
4. As a matter of coordinating land development with an effective program for providing City improvements and services it would appear to be in the general interest to encourage more rapid development in the northern half of Staten Island while adequate ground rules are established for the South Richmond area. Through City-owned land sales, mapping extension and provision of schools and other facilities the City should spur the development of interstitial areas and those adjacent to existing residential areas, particularly in the mid-Island section. While it is recognized that it is neither feasible nor desirable to halt all development in South Richmond, efforts should be made to discourage the proliferation of unplanned, scattered developments which, by leapfrogging down the Island, can impose and entrench a wholly unsatisfactory residential pattern in this entire area.

#### B. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

While it is clear that there are no simple formulas to insure ideal development conditions, it is equally apparent that much more can be done to eliminate uncertainties and confusions that have become very much a part of Staten Island's erratic growth pattern. It is incumbent upon the City of New York to take strong, affirmative leadership in establishing more sensible ground rules within which sound private and public development can proceed. Toward this end the Commission recommends:

1. Establishment of an Office of Staten Island Development Coordinator

The creation of this new administrative position is the key to insuring that the policies and programs of the City are properly carried out. As a high-ranking official appointed by the Mayor, the Development Coordinator would establish his office on the Island with a small staff (possibly an architect, planner, engineer and clerical assistance). He would be charged with coordinating the programs of the various operating agencies responsible for providing public improvements and development approvals.

Working in close liaison with the Office of the Borough President, the City Planning Commission, builders and other local interests, the Coordinator would help plan, expedite, arbitrate and otherwise cut through red tape and jurisdictional strata that might frustrate orderly development. His proximity to local problems would enable him to expedite requests for mapping and zoning changes, assist in working out new subdivision plans and, in general, act as the City's field development agent.

The Coordinator is also recommended to serve as the local renewal official, working in close cooperation with State and Federal agencies. The job of Coordinator would call for a combination of knowledge of problems and diplomatic arts that would, of necessity, call for an individual of unusual talents who could command a salary commensurate with these skills. It is quite possible that the Office of the Coordinator could be financed through the Capital Budget with partial Federal reimbursement.

2. Preparation of an Orderly Schedule of Public Improvements

A first order of City business is clarifying the "rules of the game." One of the more serious criticisms of City policy--or lack of it--on Staten Island has been the uncertainty accompanying the provision of vitally needed public improvements. In this regard, the Commission would urge that a comprehensive public improvement plan be worked out for the Island and made public so that there will be general understanding of the location and rate at which these improvements will be developed.



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To facilitate this approach, the Capital Budget and Improvement Plan--which covers a six-year period--should be reviewed with an eye toward insuring its adherence to an agreed-upon development policy. In addition, a schedule of longer-range projects--especially sewerage and highway development--should be publicized so that property owners and developers could know where they stand. It may prove feasible to divide the still undeveloped areas of the Island into development sectors (perhaps based on natural drainage areas) and assign a time-table for provision of improvements in each of these.

The rational scheduling of public improvements would be designed to get the most out of the City's limited development resources. However, a developer who wishes to advance a project ahead of the City's development schedule would be permitted to do so by providing for the necessary local improvements in accordance with standards and community needs determined by the City.

### 3. Orderly Program for Mapping and Re-mapping

As in the case of public improvements, the City's mapping and re-mapping actions should be carried out in accordance with an announced schedule. Delays in mapping or the withholding of mapping action to achieve a more desirable future development pattern should be permitted only where there is intention to consider the rights of the property owners affected (see South Richmond recommendations for further discussion of this matter). The mapping schedules are closely linked to the public improvement programs because drainage plans cannot be filed or sewers constructed until streets are legally mapped. Here again, the task of improved coordination of City activities comes to the fore.

In considering the possibility of re-mapping certain areas the City must weigh the quality of the existing map (see the mapping standards discussed below) against the cost of acquiring the present "bundle of private rights" which have accrued under conditions of old mapping and subdivisions. In many instances the complicated legal and economic barriers are such that more radical alternatives should be considered. These are explored in the South Richmond recommendations.

#### 4. Improved Mapping Standards

The present City mapping procedures, as delineated in contract specifications, are concerned for the most part with the width and alignment of streets, proper grades and drainage, and the provision of saleable lots. While these are important considerations, other factors should be incorporated into the City's mapping controls to insure modern residential development standards.

Wherever possible, the grid pattern should be abandoned in favor of curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs, and other techniques to encourage less monotonous development, to inhibit through-traffic on residential streets, and to put a minimum amount of land in streets thus making as much as ten percent more land available on the tax rolls or for use as a public facility.

Mapping should also have close relationship to the terrain and topographic features of the area. Natural assets such as streams, ponds, hills, and wooded areas should be preserved through careful street layout and drainage plans.

Where feasible, local streets in undeveloped and City-owned areas could be demapped leaving only existing streets and through streets. This could permit more flexible subdivision planning when the area is ready for development.

#### Evaluation of Zoning Regulations

The City's Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed to insure that it is providing maximum encouragement to sound development of vacant land areas. Specifically, the Zoning Code should be amended to permit planned unit development (cluster zoning). This will enable developers of one- and two-family homes to exercise greater freedom in the placing of structures within their zoned lots thus taking maximum advantage of topographical features such as hills, ponds, tree clusters, etc., without adhering to the side yard and rear yard requirements that presently inhibit such arrangements. The Planning Commission is currently preparing the text for a proposed amendment to make this possible.

In addition to planned unit development, other zoning techniques are being explored including scenic easements or scenic districts in some select areas, and flood plain zoning in areas where flooding conditions are detrimental to good development.

The Commission also believes that there are residential areas in which some higher densities might be desirable--such as the "Heartlands" and points along the SIRT route. This, and other general zoning considerations for Staten Island, are recommended for comprehensive review by the Commission in conjunction with local Staten Island officials, civic and business groups.

6. Sale of City-owned Land Coordinated With Land Development Policies

The moratorium of sale of City-owned lands should be maintained until there is clear administration commitment to a land development policy on Staten Island. The recommendation that the City encourage consolidation of development in the center and northern parts of the Island would indicate that the City could proceed more rapidly with land sales in these areas if they conform to other indicated criteria. These include:

- a. no City-owned land shall be sold in areas which are not officially mapped;
- b. no sales of land which is substandard (marshy, etc.) and which would incur high public costs to service;
- c. no sales of property which has terrain features desirable for public use--streambeds, beaches, etc.
- d. no sales of lands which are being "land banked" for future improvements such as small parks, schools, hospital and health facilities, etc.

It is further suggested that steps be taken to revise sales regulations to reduce land speculation activity and to encourage sound community development. For example, lands should not be sold off in areas where development is not likely to proceed within a reasonably short period of time, or where subdivision plans are not developed or about to be developed.

The Commission would also urge that the present purchase money mortgage system for City-owned land sales be reviewed to insure first, that the City is deriving a more equitable return; and second, that the terms do not invite long-term speculation.

C. LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

There are local, state and federal laws now under consideration which will provide an important stimulus to improved development procedures on Staten Island. The Commission urges support of the following:

1. Local Law #32, now pending before the City Council, which would withhold building permits on unmapped streets and thus prevent the chaotic practices which have developed in scattered areas throughout the borough resulting in illegal occupancies, below-grade structures, unplanned development and increased risks to lending institutions.

The Commission recognizes that opposition to this law has been largely from two groups: those who recognize that reforms are needed but believe that the law should be part of a broader "package" of development actions; and those who want no part of it, regardless of its context. In the case of the former, this very report should serve as assurance that the City is committed to a "package" of policies and programs to enhance good development (and consequently ultimate land values). As to the latter, their interests must be weighed against those of the general public--and, in the judgment of this agency, the weight is overwhelmingly in favor of providing the citizens of this City with the regulations and legislation that will insure the best possible living environment.

2. State legislation authorizing early acquisition of real property in areas designated as appropriate for urban renewal. This law, which was passed by the Legislature last year only to be vetoed, has again been introduced with some modifications which should satisfy the Governor's earlier concerns. The law would permit municipalities to move quickly to acquire properties that might otherwise be improperly developed before a comprehensive renewal plan could be completed. This would have particular relevance in the Annadale-Huguenot Area where sporadic development continues despite the City's commitment to prepare a new development plan for this area.



3. Governmental right of first refusal in the event non-profit organizations desire to dispose of tax-exempt real property. This proposed State amendment to the Real Property Law would avert a situation such as that created when the High Rock Girl Scout Camp was offered for sale on the private market. In effect, this would give the City the first opportunity to buy tax-exempt land if the non-profit owner decided to give it up. If the City failed to purchase the land within a specified period of time, it could be sold on the open market.
4. Creation of an 11th State Park Region to make New York City eligible for State Park projects. This would permit the State to underwrite the acquisition, development, and maintenance costs of parks within the City which are deemed of regional importance. At present, New York City is the only area in the entire State precluded from having State Park resources.

Staten Island's prime potential as a regional, recreational and conservation resource would make it a logical site for State Park funds. It is also important to note that the infusion of new State funds into the City would free up local budget funds for other priority projects--in Staten Island and elsewhere--which have had to wait because of money limitations.

5. On the Federal level, the "New Communities" section of the 1966 Urban Development Act which would make loans available to "Public Land Development Agencies" to purchase open or predominantly undeveloped land in connection with the development of new neighborhoods, subdivisions or communities.

The new section would have particular pertinence in Staten Island and would dovetail with other recommendations embodied in this report--especially in the development of the South Richmond area. Federal loans, requiring up to 15 years to pay for land acquisition and subdivision planning, Federal mortgage insurance, "Fanny May" Mortgage assistance, longer mortgage maturities would all be available to reduce interest and repayment levels so as to provide ultimately lower costs of building lots with planned improvements.

D. SOUTH RICHMOND DEVELOPMENT

Nowhere else in the City of New York is there the planning opportunity that is found in South Richmond. Here are the last remaining major tracts of undeveloped land in the City. They have begun to feel the pressures for new construction and have already been subjected to the kind of development that can best be described as "urban sprawl."

It is this area of Staten Island that is handicapped by the confused and complex ownership patterns, uncertain mapping status, and uncoordinated and inadequate city services. It is an area where simple solutions are defied; where we must look beyond existing programs and procedures to find our answers.

In reviewing the possible options open to the City in improving land development procedures in South Richmond, we rejected both extremes--i.e., either to do nothing and permit matters to move ahead under present conditions, or to recommend City acquisition of the entire 15,000 acres for re-mapping and subdivision. Within the "middle-range" of options, it became apparent that the situation in South Richmond could be appreciably improved with some of the basic recommendations already discussed in this chapter. It was also apparent, however, that the scope and effectiveness of the City's actions would be proportionate to the costs the City was willing to incur to achieve these development improvements.

With improved administrative and legislative programs outlined above, there is good assurance that the City could bring about positive effects in some parts of South Richmond. The areas most easily controlled, of course, are City-owned vacant lands--some 4,000 acres in South Richmond, including the Annadale-Huguenot Urban Renewal Area and sanitation land fill sites. Of the remaining privately-owned land, excluding private institutions, we find in ascending order of "control costs":\*

1. vacant land in unmapped areas--about 1,500 acres
2. vacant land in mapped areas--about 2,800 acres
3. partially developed land in unmapped areas--about 400 acres

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\* rough figures in gross acres



## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

### VACANT LAND and MAPPING STATUS (Generalized Areas)

-  Predominantly Vacant-City Owned
-  Predominantly Vacant-Private
-  Blocks Within Which 5 or More Dwellings Were Built Since 1960
-  Unmapped Areas
-  Parks and Areas Developed Before 1960
-  Zoning Boundary For Manufacturing Districts

SOURCE: DEPTS. OF CITY PLANNING, REAL ESTATE

## SOUTH RICHMOND

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SCALE IN FEET  
2000 0 2000 4000 6000







4. partially developed land in mapped areas--about 500 acres
5. substantially developed land in unmapped areas--about 1,100 acres
6. substantially developed land in mapped areas--about 1,300 acres

These six categories of land together with the City-owned land do not fall into any simple patterns for easy or coordinated approaches to sound development when charted on a map. While there is some hope that two or three major holdings of City-owned land could serve as nuclei for better mapping or subdivision, they are surrounded by an admixture of scattered development, small private holdings, and other features that argue against low-cost solutions.

It was because of these difficulties that the Commission turned to possible solutions that went beyond present--or easily obtainable--development programs. It is the judgment of the Planning Commission that an entirely new vehicle for development should be considered in South Richmond; one that can act in behalf of the City and in the public interest and, at the same time, not be incumbered by the restraints--economic, administrative and legal--that have handcuffed the City in the past. It is urged that the City give prompt consideration to the formation of a South Richmond Development Corporation which would be a quasi-public land development agency.

This Corporation could be set up by the City (State legislation probably would be required) for the purposes of acquiring land for subdivision, re-mapping and re-sale to private developers. The Corporation could set up a revolving fund for this operation, enabling it to buy and sell land, purchase subdivision rights from private property owners, and prepare subdivision plans in accordance with City programs and policies for land development in this area.

In carrying out its development operations, the Corporation could be given maximum encouragement to re-map and re-plat land where necessary, and City powers of eminent domain under the renewal laws could be used in some instances. In most cases, outright acquisition of land would not be necessary where development rights could be purchased. After subdivisions were worked out and approved, the private owner could

proceed with development on the basis of much higher (and undoubtedly more profitable) standards.

Land subdivision, in all areas, would be subject to the broad planning objectives set forth in this report. Adequate land would have to be set aside for community facilities; natural terrain features would be respected; the concept of strip parks, scenic easements, and other open space amenities would be adhered to; and a variety of building types and design would be encouraged. The Corporation, as a creature of the City, would also serve as an educational force to guide improved development (providing architectural and site planning assistance to developers, encouraging private foundations to participate in housing demonstrations, etc.) and to insure that overriding City policies such as those expressed in the Fair Housing Practices Law are viewed as a challenge rather than an irritant to community development.

In addition to the aforementioned functions the Corporation could also serve to buy up land for longer-range "banking" purposes. This would be especially useful in areas which will not be served by City improvements for some time and in which rapid new development could prove detrimental. The Corporation would be closely reviewed by the Staten Island Development Coordinator's Office, the City Planning Commission, and other agencies and officials to insure that its programs are consistent with City policies and reflect overall planning considerations.

It is deemed desirable that the Corporation be an indigenous agency, with a strong representation of local officials, civic and business people, and prominent individuals serving on the Board. It might also be desirable for the Development Coordinator to serve ex-officio on the Corporation Board. The strong local representation to the Board of the Corporation will not only insure that Staten Islanders have a real stake in shaping the destiny of the Island, but will enable the City to draw upon the cumulative knowledge of people who are intimately familiar with Richmond's development problems.

While the details of funding and legally constituting this Corporation will require more detailed study than was possible in the preparation of this report, the new agency might be initiated on the basis of a bond issue backed by the City-owned land in this area. It might be possible for the City to convey its land to the Corporation on a

by the Borough President will be fruitful in finding solutions which can point the way to natural drainage patterns in some areas.

F. HEARTLANDS DEVELOPMENT

Development of the "Heartlands" Area should proceed in accordance with the broad land use and policy guides outlined for this area in this report. The thousand-acre "Heartlands" Area already has become a focal point of commercial activity, and pressures for residential development are increasing. It is the area generally enclosed by Fresh Kills, Willowbrook and LaTourette Parks.

The commercial rezoning of a 130-acre tract within this area was approved early in 1966 and will provide for a shopping center with an enclosed mall which will contain about 650,000 square feet of floor space. Eventually the developers of this center may construct as much as 2,000,000 square feet of office and retail space, making this one of the largest centers in the entire region. Just south of this proposed new commercial complex is a 250,000 square foot shopping center already in operation, with a 1,000 seat theater under construction and other smaller commercial uses being planned.

To the west of the commercial hub, just off Richmond Avenue, is the 375-acre section of the City's Fresh Kills land fill area. This is an area which the Commission believes is suitable for future educational, civic and cultural facilities. In this regard, it may prove feasible to consider this area as a possible site for the new Richmond College--the City University's proposed senior college and graduate center on Staten Island--if the landfill timetable and other site requirements of the Board of Higher Education can be reconciled.

The residentially zoned sections of the Heartlands lie north and east of the commercial center. The Commission believes there is an opportunity here to encourage more diversified development, both in terms of building types and somewhat higher densities. While it is not likely that this area will be completely developed in a short period of time, pressures for residential development have already been evident. The bulk of the area has been officially mapped and construction can proceed as a matter of right.

deferred payment basis or some similar arrangements whereby the City would be reimbursed (and hopefully make a profit) once the lands were sold off for private development.

Because there is a necessity for speed in dealing with South Richmond matters, the Commission would urge the City to act as expeditiously as possible to explore the feasibility of establishing the Corporation. If this new body can be activated within a year, it might be desirable for it to assume the development responsibilities of the Annadale-Huguenot Urban Renewal Area as an important starting point in its operations. This is an area which is ready for immediate action and could provide the needed revenues in land sales to fund the further development activities in South Richmond.

#### E. MID-ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

The central part of the Island has been most heavily pressured by new development demands--especially on the eastern portion. This central area is one in which it would be desirable to see new development proceed as rapidly as the market forces dictate. While City services are still not available in part of the area it should be a sector of higher priority in establishing the City's public improvement time-table. Similarly, once the City's program for sales of City-owned lands is clarified, this would be a likely area for early sale of City lands which otherwise meet the appropriate land sale conditions.

Since City sewer services may be years away from some sections of the Mid-Island area, private sewage treatment plants in this part of the Island can help fill the vacuum if they are developed in accordance with the rigid criteria noted in Chapter X and are consistent with general planning policies for this area.

Another aspect of sewerage and drainage problems affects the eastern shore of this section which is swampy, below grade and subject to flooding. Unless an adequate drainage program is worked out which can turn to advantage some of the existing problems, many expensive homes which were built before official grades were fixed, will be seriously threatened by runoff and flooding from "officially graded" streets adjacent to them. The Commission is hopeful that a special study being undertaken



One factor which delayed earlier development is the deep clay sub-soil conditions which make septic tank construction uneconomical and difficult. Accordingly, one major developer has asked for a private sewage treatment plant to accommodate up to 2,000 dwelling units. The Commission has approved this request contingent upon certain conditions which would protect the health, welfare and safety of the residents of the area--and which would permit the development to proceed consistent with the general policy guides expressed by the Commission.

While the Commission has expressed the view that the "Heartlands" Area has fine potential for greater residential diversity and new approaches to urban development, it does not believe this can be achieved by the fixing of a rigid development plan for the entire area at this time, unless the City is willing to risk public capital to implement the plan. Implicit in establishing policy guides for improved development on Staten Island is that they can be applied to different areas at different times with the necessary flexibility to achieve maximum effectiveness.

We do not believe that a rigid site plan--with a detailed prescription for the exact siting of structures, or a zoning change to encourage higher densities five, ten or fifteen years hence--will satisfy the requisites for sound development. Vacant land zoning, unlike zoning to protect the character of an existing development, should be much more resilient. That is why the Commission would recommend that specific subdivisions and detailed distributions of densities be considered when the lands are closer to the development stage. This is not only more realistic in terms of the market considerations, but also prevents undue land speculation.

In the case of the Heartlands, the Commission has indicated its belief that some higher densities might be considered as part of a subdivision application in this area. However, we do not believe densities in any development in the area should average more than 35-40 dwelling units per acre as compared to 25 units permitted in the present R3-2 district. In addition, these subdivision plans would have to take account of lands that would be set aside for schools and other community facilities so that they are integrated into community life and conform with the new approach to urban development we have sought for Staten Island.

G. PROGRAMS FOR THE NORTHERN SECTION OF THE ISLAND

The major challenge of the older northern and northeastern sections of Richmond is to rehabilitate and revitalize some of the older and deteriorating sections--both residential and commercial. To best achieve this, the Commission believes that the Staten Island Development Coordinator should be empowered to recommend and implement a variety of renewal actions, ranging from code enforcement programs to spot clearance and redevelopment of blighted structures.

To carry out an effective and continuing redevelopment, rehabilitation and conservation effort, Staten Island should receive a prorated annual allocation of Federal renewal funds--which would be at present about \$1 million to \$1.5 million on a per capita basis--so as not to compete with other pressing demands for renewal action in the rest of the City.

The Coordinator would submit to the City a program for renewal action in conformity with Federal requirements, which would permit the maximum flexibility in dealing with some of the problem areas of the Island. Needless to say, these funds could be used in sections other than the north and northeastern areas, but it is presumed that there would be little need for public underwriting of such projects in other areas.

Along with residential renewal, the Commission would urge the owners of the older commercial areas to help revitalize their business streets, provide more parking and otherwise strengthen their economic base.

Another longer-range program would involve the needs of the Civic Center in St. George. Ultimate decision will have to be made as to whether the hub of civic activity should remain in proximity to the Ferry Terminals or in an area further south--the "Heartlands, for example. The Borough Hall in St. George is far from efficient as an office building and will have to be replaced in the not too distant future. The site of the new building and the re-use of the old one (this could be an excellent structure for a museum) are matters which will require a separate study.

## VI. T R A N S P O R T A T I O N

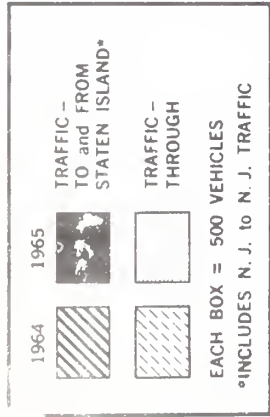
### A. HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT

There is an urgent need to provide Staten Island with a limited access north-south route to handle the increasing traffic loads which are being generated by the Narrows Bridge-Staten Island Expressway-Willowbrook Expressway routes, as well as by local traffic.

In its earlier comprehensive transportation reports, the Planning Commission had urged that consideration be given to designing the proposed Richmond Parkway to expressway standards to insure that it could carry express buses and commercial vehicles if necessary. Further, we had suggested a review of the northerly section of the route because the existing grades over Todt Hill would not meet expressway standards and the road would not adequately serve the burgeoning Heartlands commercial area. At about this time, numerous civic groups and local residents also urged that the route be shifted to avoid running through the natural Greenbelt area.

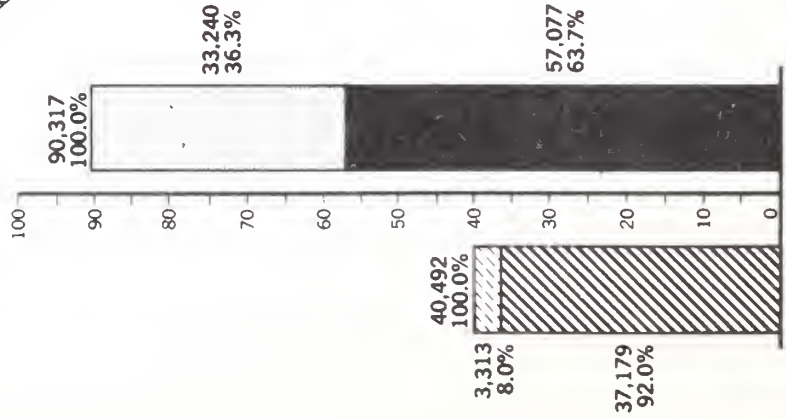
Currently, the City's Transportation Council is studying five alternates to the presently proposed route. However, permission was given to proceed with the second and third sections of the highway in south Richmond in conformity with parkway design. On the basis of this decision, the Commission must assume that the facility will, indeed, be a parkway and that the Island still will be in need of a limited access road to handle commercial vehicles and keep them off the residential streets.

Accordingly, the Commission recommends that the City proceed with the necessary steps to acquire the right of way for the West Shore Expressway. This road, which will run along the western shoreline from the Staten Island Expressway to the Outerbridge Crossing, could have been deferred some years if Richmond Parkway were a combined traffic facility. However, some proponents have argued that since Federal and State funds are primarily involved, the City should take advantage of current highway allocations.



## TRAFFIC SUMMARY

(IN THOUSANDS)



## DAILY VEHICULAR TRAFFIC ENTERING and LEAVING STATEN ISLAND 1964-1965

SOURCE: THE PORT OF NEW YORK AUTHORITY

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These prevailing sentiments notwithstanding, the Planning Commission would not recommend the acquisition of lands on the South Shore below Great Kills Park for the purposes of extending the Shore Front Drive. It has been argued that this facility is needed so that it can be tied into the necessary beach erosion and hurricane protection programs for this area. The Commission would urge that the City move ahead with its plans for beach protection but that the matter of a roadway be abandoned because it would be detrimental to existing and proposed development in this desirable shorefront area.

The Planning Commission does not share the view that an asphalt barrier is a requisite part of the City's seascape. There are areas of the City--and South Richmond may very well be among them--where land and people might touch the water without the intrusion of a major highway. Recognizing that very often the purpose of such highway acquisition was to insure that the waterfront would remain in public use, we would suggest that these same commendable aims be achieved through a park acquisition program or through a conservation effort.

We would recommend that instead of the Shore Front Drive continuation (whose traffic demands are not yet demonstrated), the City redesign the Hylan Boulevard widening south of Great Kills Park to develop it as its name implies--as a first class boulevard--with adequate service lanes to handle commercial vehicles and wide, landscaped malls to enhance the general tone of development along the route.

There is another proposed extension of the Shore Front Drive (heading northward around the "horn" to the New Jersey bridges) which appears to have more merit inasmuch as it will serve the reviving Stapleton Piers and the business community to the north. A study is currently under way to determine the feasibility of this route.

#### B. TRANSIT

From all indications at present, the Staten Island Rapid Transit should be maintained and strengthened as an important transit link on the Island. The line, a vestigial operation of the

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, is currently subsidized by the City. It uses ancient B & O cars and a level of service that will be inadequate to meet the growing passenger loads which are projected as the Island's populations increases.

A modest modernization program should be instituted on the SIRT including purchase of newer vintage cars, station improvements and modernization of equipment. The State has already spent large sums for a general program of grade crossing eliminations to permit better train service and improved vehicular traffic. The Commission recommends that the City review the SIRT modernization in its negotiations with the B & O Railroad to determine the most effective means of financing improvements on this vital north-south mass transit link.

On a longer-range basis, the City must begin to study the possibility of linking Staten Island to Manhattan via a mass transit route. It would seem that the best overland route is across the Bayonne Peninsula to link up with the PATH tubes or an entirely new river crossing. This would have to be weighed against other possible routes including the recently proposed tunnel to Manhattan. Long-range studies should also consider the possibility of hydrofoils, hovercraft and other transportation innovations that could take advantage of the water routes to Manhattan and other boroughs.

The fate of the Manhattan links is understandably of longer-range consequence to the Staten Island commuter than the SIRT, the bus lines and the ferries upon which he depends at present. The ferry service would appear to be generally satisfactory and requires no major policy changes in the immediate future. In the case of bus operations, however, there appears to be need for improved express service over the Narrows Bridge which could be related to a "beefed up" subway service in Brooklyn.

On the Island, a bus feeder system should be worked out to bring commuters from the outlying areas of the Island to SIRT stations and connect with express bus service across the Narrows Bridge.

## VII. I N D U S T R I A L   D E V E L O P M E N T

While Staten Island, like other urban areas, has shown a decline in industrial activity during the past several years, it offers a number of physical advantages which would argue for an eventual reversal of the downward trend.

In assessing what immediate actions must be undertaken for proper development, it was noted earlier in this report that industrial development did not rate as high a priority as residential development because the latter is a real, pressing issue while the former is currently somewhat dormant. This is not to imply, however, that once the exigencies of immediate development problems are met we will ignore the insistent need for an expanded economy and job base on the Island.

The infusion of new plants and new jobs in Richmond will require some public and quasi-public actions, as well as an overall commitment to spur such development on the part of the City Administration. The Department of Commerce, for example, should be called upon to work with the local Chambers of Commerce and other business and trade groups to excite interest wherever possible in the potentials of the Island for non-residential development.

A key area which could serve new industry is located within the 750-acre Staten Island Industrial Park site in Mariner's Harbor which the Planning Commission had recommended for development almost five years ago. About a third of this area is located on high ground with excellent sub-surface conditions for construction of all types. The City's Industrial Development Corporation and the new Public Development Corporation should consider this a prime area (served by expressway and rail facilities) for new industrial enterprises.

While industrial activity is still sluggish on the Island, there seems to be a resurgence of interest in its port potential. The Stapleton Piers, long an eyesore, are now facing a renaissance as leases are being consummated to develop a modern, containerized cargo handling facility here. The City should encourage this trend as consistent with its long-range program for port improvement. The Planning Commission, in its report The Port of New York, pointed to Staten Island and Brooklyn as the most appropriate

areas in the City to pick up the waning cargo handling activity that once centered in Manhattan. In this regard, the Port of New York Authority, which has no pier facilities at all in Staten Island, should be asked to study the possibility of additional port improvements in the northwestern section of the Island along Kill van Kull and Arthur Kill.

To further employment opportunities on the Island, there is need for more detailed studies of types of industrial and commercial activities that might be best suited for the Island, and to determine what environmental deficiencies inhibit new industrial expansion here so that they might be corrected through a variety of local, State and Federal programs.



# VIII. I N S T I T U T I O N S

With its large vacant land resources Staten Island continues to tempt institutions looking for new sites. This poses a three-fold problem:

- 1) that the new institution will consider acreage available as the key element in its locational decision to the exclusion of other, perhaps more important factors;
- 2) that the Island will become overburdened with institutional land uses removed from the normal concerns of the populace, thereby reinforcing its traditional image of isolation from the mainstream of City life; and
- 3) that new governmental services will not be related to the population groups which need them most.

The City must, therefore, review each institutional holding over which it now has, or will have in the future, some measure of control in order to determine whether the institution can still provide useful service and whether its location best suits the interests of the institution and of the Island as a whole. Those private holdings over which the City exercises no direct control must be watched as carefully for signs of demise as governmental institutional holdings are watched. Some of them, such as Camp High Rock, can offer valuable opportunities if the City is ready to act in time. Legislation presently before the State Legislature would give the City first rights to purchase any tax-exempt property offered for sale. This bill should receive the City's strong support.

Changes affecting a number of large-size institutions on Staten Island present unique opportunities to be seized in the effort to bring about a sound framework for development. Two major institutional prospects are the State Mental Hospital and the Miller Army Airfield sites, both with coastal frontages along the Lower Bay.

The 240-acre site of the proposed State Mental Health Hospital near South Beach is much too large for current plans for this facility.

Part of the new State approach is to limit the size of hospitals to no more than 1,000 beds. A hospital designed to this specification would need only 50-60 acres, leaving almost 200 acres for other types of development.

The City should discuss the possibility of acquisition or a land swap with the State, either toward releasing the entire site for the residential, recreational and educational uses to which it is so well suited, or at least toward securing the almost 200 excess acres of prime shorefront land for these uses.

Miller Airfield, just to the south, is being less and less intensively used by the Defense Department. Operations are gradually being transferred to Floyd Bennett Field, except for Army training activities. The City should pursue discussions with the Federal Government in hopes of securing this 180-acre site. There has been some conjecture that this area could be acquired from the Government for use as a small general aviation facility. The Commission would recommend that this facility be acquired for such purpose recognizing in time that a new field would have to be developed in the Mariner's Harbor, where it would be more compatible with abutting uses.

At that point, Miller Airfield could be developed for the uses to which it is ideally suited--residential, recreational and educational. In fact, the proximity of these two large sites--Miller Field and the hospital site--along the water suggests that a new concept of coastal development might be employed in planning these areas to fulfill their recreational and residential potential.

In addition to these two major land holdings, there are other institutional opportunities that should be kept in mind for future development ranging from the five-acre Coast Guard Station near the Ferry Terminal to the 750-acre institutional complex created by the City's Seaview Hospital and Home and the adjacent Willowbrook School for the Mentally Retarded operated by the State. Each of these institutions has either phased out its operations (as is the case of the Coast Guard which is moving to Governor's Island) or has radically changed its program so that huge acts of land are virtually unused.

Among the major new institutional uses on the Island--for which we might look to the old institutions for adequate sites--are the college and university facilities that are needed to serve the growing population.

Two private colleges are located on the Island though they do not necessarily serve the Island exclusively: Notre Dame College and Wagner College, which is currently undertaking a five-million-dollar expansion program. Staten Island Community College is building on a 35-acre site near Emerson Hill. In contrast to the sensitive development of some of the other institutional holdings on the Island, this City-sponsored development is an example of how efficiently a bulldozer can deface the natural features of the land.

One year after the Community College opens its doors it will be too small and additional space will have to be found. The Community College must decide between two alternatives: it may concentrate additional development in its present central location or expand into a branch system. While each has advantages, a branch system would extend the benefits of this type of institution over a wider area. One branch could be located in a suitable section of South Richmond to encourage more concentrated residential development in those areas which have already experienced considerable growth, and, if demand warrants, one in the north to serve the densely developed residential areas on the Island.

Richmond College, offering the third and fourth years of baccalaureate study and a masters degree program, is scheduled to open in rented space in 1969. The Board of Higher Education anticipates an enrollment of 2,000 full-time day-session students by 1973. Richmond College is completely separate from the community college and should be conceived of as a quality institution on a par with the senior colleges of the City.

The current Master Plan for the City University of New York, dated April 13, 1966, projects a shortage of 9,000 seats in the senior college system by 1972, even with the construction of Richmond College and a new Brooklyn-Queens senior college. It is suggested that a substantial part of this need can be met by enlarging the planned capacity of Richmond College. The lack of mass transit connections between Staten Island and the other boroughs need not limit capacity if Richmond College is planned as a dormitory facility.

Legislation is currently before the State Legislature which would authorize the City University to make use of funds from the New York State Dormitory Authority's proposed \$400,000,000 bond issue.

The Heartlands has been suggested as a possible site for Richmond College, principally because a large amount of land can be made available and the presence of the College in a proposed commercial-civic center can add a needed touch of variety and can supply centralized cultural facilities and programs. Other location suggestions have been the use of parts of Miller Field or the Staten Mental Health Hospital site. Both would be excellent sites for the college.

The projected increase in residential population will warrant a new general care hospital on and for Staten Island. The Hospital Review and Planning Council is closely watching the developing situation and will time its proposals to coincide with population growth.



## IX. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

There are 4,943 acres of Parks Department property on Staten Island, or 12.7 percent of the total land mass, as against a New York City average of 17 percent. These figures do not include parks which have been approved by the City Planning Commission but have not as yet been officially mapped, nor do they include parks which appear on the official City map but have not as yet been acquired. A number of parks had been programmed for acquisition with State Park Bond Issue funds. However, a shift in priorities within the City made it necessary to use more of these funds in other boroughs. Following is a list of Staten Island parks for which acquisition funds should be allocated:

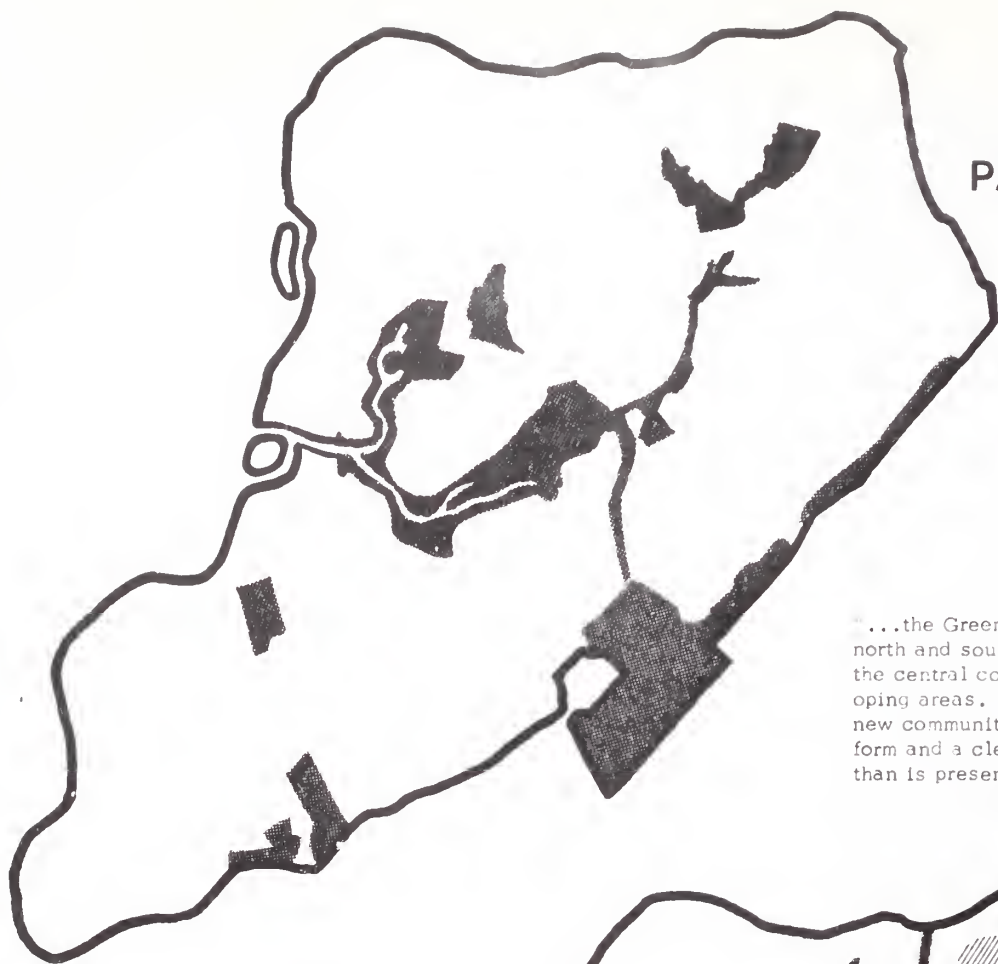
|                                | Acreage | Assessed<br>Valuation |
|--------------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Conference House Park Addition | 268     | \$1,604,800           |
| Wolfe's Pond Park Addition     | 77      | 508,900               |
| Richmond County Country Club   | 123     | 2,012,100*            |
| West Shore Expressway Park     | 380     | 730,000               |
| Total                          | 848     | \$4,855,800           |

The acquisition of these parks will complete the skeleton structure of a Staten Island Park System upon which future park planning may be based. It is conceived that this framework, when fleshed out and extended into a fully mature system, will form a pattern of clearly defined communities throughout the Island.

### A. LOCAL RECREATION PLANNING

Estimated increases in the residential population of Staten Island necessitate the provision of additional local active recreation space. Relatively small parcels suitable for athletic facilities and varieties of small parks to serve all age groups in a community should be reserved during the course of the development of new communities. The family back yard is not considered sufficient for outdoor activity. The back yard in a standard single-family development, while useful in many ways, cannot provide space for more strenuous recreational

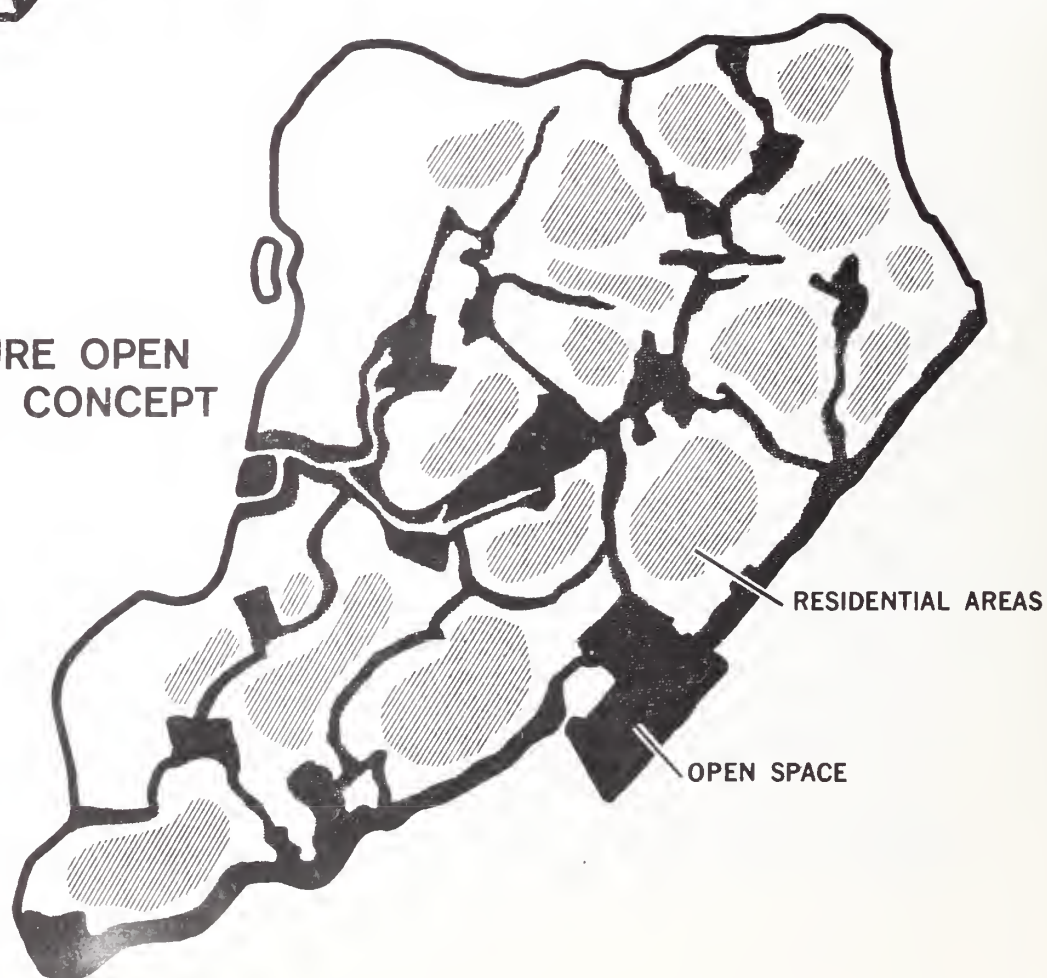
\* If the Richmond County Country Club is made available for purchase the City should acquire it as a public facility.



**PARKS—1966**

"...the Greenbelt can be extended north and south to branch out from the central core into newly developing areas. This will help define new communities, give them shape, form and a clearer sense of place than is presently possible."

**FUTURE OPEN  
SPACE CONCEPT**



Staten Island offers a variety of recreation activities, from rowboating in the park to hiking through the City's only natural forest preserves. To take full advantage of the borough's potential, forward-looking recreation planning and thoughtful conservation is required.





activity, and the ownership pattern does not lend itself to cooperative use of open spaces.

The passage of a cluster zoning amendment should be supported also for its advantages to recreation planning. By increasing densities in one portion of a subdivision, cluster planning permits the setting aside of land for recreational areas and common as well as for conservation purposes. Finally, outdoor community recreation planning should be accompanied by indoor recreational facilities planning. In some cases, these indoor facilities should be designed in conjunction with outdoor areas; in others perhaps, they can be jointly planned with City education facilities and grounds.

The fully developed higher density sections of northern Staten Island can be aided only by allocating parcels to recreation use as they become vacant--a procedure now having some success in the densely developed, recreation-poor sections of other boroughs. But the communities which are now beginning to fill up can be assisted immediately. An understanding of the growth patterns on Staten Island enables the City to avoid a repetition of the errors of the past, errors which the current "vest pocket" park program seeks to correct.

Scattered City-owned parcels in growing communities should be pinpointed, examined for suitability in terms of accessibility, topography, size and location and reserved immediately. If available City-owned land is unsuitable for local recreation facilities, private land should be purchased now while prices are relatively low and while appropriate locations remain.

The large parks programmed for acquisition throughout the Island may eventually serve some local recreation needs, particularly if their perimeters are designed with this purpose in mind. However, the development of local facilities in areas now experiencing growth has a higher order of priority than the development of the larger park lands because the neighborhood facility may serve to attract and concentrate new residential construction within a specific area.



B. CITY-WIDE RECREATION PLANNING

At present Staten Island can provide two types of recreation activities rare enough to draw users from the entire City: beaches on the South Shore and natural forest preserves. Every beach in the City is overcrowded and the outbound summer week-end traffic is an indication of the lengths New Yorkers will go to find waterfront facilities.

There are no natural forest preserves anywhere within the City limits. Camp High Rock is the first such facility. The natural forest environment of the area's plant and animal life will be retained and the public will be allowed to enjoy it. This type of natural preserve can set a pattern for the other conservation areas on Staten Island which are or will be in City ownership.

Staten Island's undeveloped park land may also serve a new City-wide function currently being considered as an appropriate area of municipal responsibility: the provision of space for day camps which provide organized summertime activity for unserved or poorly served City youngsters. Relatively large tracts are required to make day camp operation economically feasible, and Staten Island is our major source of such land. Federal funds other than park acquisition and development funds may be used for the development of day camps, thereby enabling the City to develop new park land without recourse to funds needed elsewhere within the City.

C. PRESERVATION OF NATURAL BEAUTY

Because of its unusual topography and the waters which surround it, Staten Island has many areas of unusual beauty, even splendor. Their preservation may be accomplished in a number of ways short of actual acquisition. The acquisition of scenic easement on private lands and the imposition of height limitation to preserve the view from bluff to seashore or from bluff to valley and woodland forest are only two of the possible courses of action. Those districts with scenic value of a quality which merits preservation should be outlined and appropriate City action for each one determined.

The Staten Island Greenbelt, a concept suggested by the advantageous links existing between mapped park lands, various open uses and areas of unusual topography, should be carefully delineated as part of this study. In extending the Greenbelt concept to include a wider range of natural features, special attention should be placed on the brooks and streams which are scattered throughout the island. Many have already been swallowed by the bulldozer. As with most natural land features, once lost they can never be replaced. When coupled with an imaginative local street system, the conservation of these streams can be used as a device in delineating and planning residential development of distinction.

#### D. A CORRECTIVE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DEFICIENCIES

Those areas in Staten Island fortunate enough to possess natural land features hold potential for distinctive development. But numerous areas either do not possess those features, or, if they once did, few traces are left. Travelling through South Richmond, for instance, one sees large tracts of land covered with scrub growth, ravines which may have once been full of running water, woods scarred by fire. City efforts at intensive open space planning should look not only to those areas which are an obvious source of amenities, but to those areas where beauty has been lost and must be replaced by more difficult conservation measures, even though results may not be seen for decades. Such measures, though expensive and time-consuming, are particularly necessary for a borough which is conceived of as a series of residential communities providing as many amenities as possible.

It is entirely possible that the mapping of open use lands possessing actual or potential conservation values will show links similar to those which serve as the basis for the Greenbelt concept. If so, the Greenbelt can be extended north and south and branch out from the central core into newly developing areas. This will help define new communities, give them shape, form and a clearer sense of place than is presently possible.

More immediate action presents itself in a program to help clean up the wooded areas and to re-forest areas which have been damaged or destroyed by fire. The Commission would urge that this be looked upon as an excellent job opportunity

project. We recommend that the Department of Parks, Department of Real Estate, Department of Sanitation, Fire Department and other City agencies involved in land maintenance, public health and safety, join with the Office of Economic Opportunity to develop a summer employment program which would not only involve clean-up but the learning of various skills which go into dealing with conservation and reforestation problems.



Greenbelt of open space and wooded areas extends south down center of Island in airview overlooking Staten Island Expressway. Intersection for proposed Richmond Parkway is in foreground.



## X. ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

### A. WATER AND AIR POLLUTION

The addition of State and Federal funds to the City's existing Capital Budget Program to provide sewerage and sewage disposal facilities offers a valuable opportunity to accelerate these improvements in Staten Island. Inasmuch as these projects are exempted from the City's legal debt-incurring limitation until 1972, there is further reason to urge the greatest speed possible in programming their development.

The City should also consider Staten Island a prime area for use of Federal grants for sewer and water facilities under the Housing Act of 1965. These funds will be available for facilities to help promote orderly community development and would be specifically applicable to the provision of improvements in the vacant and underdeveloped areas of the Island.

While there is a well-defined program and acceptable techniques for the elimination of water pollution, the inter-State problems of air pollution are less easily controlled. The recently published report by the Mayor's Task Force on Air Pollution cites in some detail the magnitude of the City's--and the region's--air pollution dilemma. As had been noted earlier, one of the major nuisances in Staten Island is odors which are difficult to measure or control. Steps should be taken to further reduce the odor factor by more rigorous inspections of industrial operations.

### B. BEACH AND HURRICANE PROTECTION

The Planning Commission urges that the City proceed promptly with a program to curb beach erosion and storm damage along the southern shore of Staten Island. Federal funds for this project are available through the Corps of Engineers.

As noted earlier, the Commission does not recommend the continuation of Shore Front Drive below the Great Kills Park area for beach protection purposes. The justification of this roadway north of Great Kills was borne out in the Corps of Engineers' special report on Staten Island which indicated that the road could account for major cost savings in areas where hurricane protection was required.



Along the southern portion of the shoreline between Great Kills Park and Tottenville Beach, little if any hurricane protection improvements are needed; rather, prime consideration has been given to protecting the beaches from the erosive action of tides and milder forces. The roadway would not contribute to this aspect of the project and therefore no cogent reason exists for extending the Shore Front Drive along a route immediately adjacent to the beach south of Great Kills Park. Moreover, by re-aligning the roadway to a point further inland, a greater portion of the seaward land could be saved for recreational use.

C. DRAINAGE PLAN FOR MARSHLANDS

Flood plain and drainage problems are particularly apparent in the Graham Beach, Midland Beach and Oakwood Beach areas. These difficulties are exacerbated when homes which are built below the finally approved grades are threatened by run-off from legally conforming streets.

The Commission urges that every effort be made to find alternative drainage plans to better serve the marshy areas of the Island. At present a special study of this problem is being carried out under the auspices of the Borough President. It is hoped that the findings of this report will substantiate the contention that other means to handle the natural run-off can be substituted for conventional storm sewers in these areas. It may prove possible to create natural drainage ponds which might have recreational features as well.

D. PRIVATE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS

The recent passage of an amendment to the zoning resolution to permit private sewage treatment plants in residential developments of 50 or more units, focuses attention upon another device to permit development in areas currently unserved by City sewers. Inasmuch as developers could always build in unserved areas either by providing septic tanks (subject to Health Department authorization) or by arranging with the Department of Public Works to build a private pumping station to force sewage into City collector sewers, the private sewage disposal plant becomes just another alternative to development in unserved areas.

Because these facilities have decided advantages over septic tanks, the City should consider them for approval if they meet the criteria of the Health Department, the Department of Public Works and the City Planning Commission.

After reviewing these criteria with the other agencies involved, the Commission urges that the following guidelines be considered over and above regulations that already exist:

1. No plant shall be more than 1 million gallons per day capacity
2. The zoning amendment should be changed to limit these plants to developments of 100 or more units, rather than 50 or more.
3. The Department of Public Works should consider the designation of its un-sewered drainage districts as temporary sewer districts so that appropriate limitations might be set on the number of treatment facilities that should go in any one district.
4. The Planning Commission should review development plans to insure that they are representative of good planning for the area and are consistent with general city development policies. Provision of land for schools, libraries, small parks, etc. should be made prior to the granting of a permit.
5. The City must have the right to hook up local public facilities to use the sewage plant.
6. No enlargement or modification of the plant should be allowed without specific approval of the Planning Commission.



Older commercial and residential sections in northern part of the Island require a range of aids to help revitalize areas in decline, protect those in jeopardy. State and Federal programs should be sought, where applicable, to relieve strained City resources.



## XI. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

This report is an integral part of the Comprehensive Planning Program which the Department of City Planning is currently developing for the entire City. Specific issues which were touched upon in this report, such as housing, renewal, recreational planning and industrial development, will all be the subject of more detailed studies growing out of the planning process.

This report has sought to highlight some of the more important concerns in Richmond and recommend appropriate policies and programs to deal with these matters. These recommendations, once implemented, would provide the necessary policy framework for carrying out a successful planning operation.

The creation of a proper mechanism to implement the City's development programs is crucial to successful planning on Staten Island--or any place else, for that matter. It is for this reason that we have sought to concentrate in this report on operational, administrative and legislative actions that will help make planning work--and not upon isolated design schemes which, like exotic creatures in nature, often fail to survive in alien climates.

Acclimating Staten Island for new development concepts will be no mean achievement: it will call for vigorous public and private efforts to spark new commitments, reverse the momentum of current practices, and kindle a common sense of purpose. It would be fruitless to seek radical new governmental procedures in the face of a hostile building industry or an apathetic public. Each must play a positive, constructive role if we are to achieve genuine breakthroughs in new urban development approaches.

Insofar as government is concerned, the first order of business must be responsible coordination of its myriad development activities. The establishment of an official coordinator's office is the highest priority to help establish the climate conducive to good planning and good development. Stemming from this first action are the other high priority steps outlined in Chapter V of this report.

It has been noted that one of the basic realities confronting us in our efforts to implement a sound development program is the serious limitation upon the City's fiscal and manpower resources.



Accordingly, wherever applicable and compatible with City-wide needs, steps should be taken to seek out available State and Federal programs which could augment the City's strained monetary resources. These could include such Federal sources as urban renewal, sewer and water facilities grants, advance acquisition grants, highway funds, open space and urban beautification grants, beach erosion and hurricane protection funds, and other programs covering health, mental health and community facilities, mass transportation and water pollution.

On the State level, resources for park acquisition and development, water purification, housing, highway facilities and preservation of scenic and historic areas, all offer opportunities for Staten Island. Other agencies, such as the Port of New York Authority, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, the Tri-State Transportation Commission, and the newly created Public Development Corporation, also have the tools and wherewithal to help.

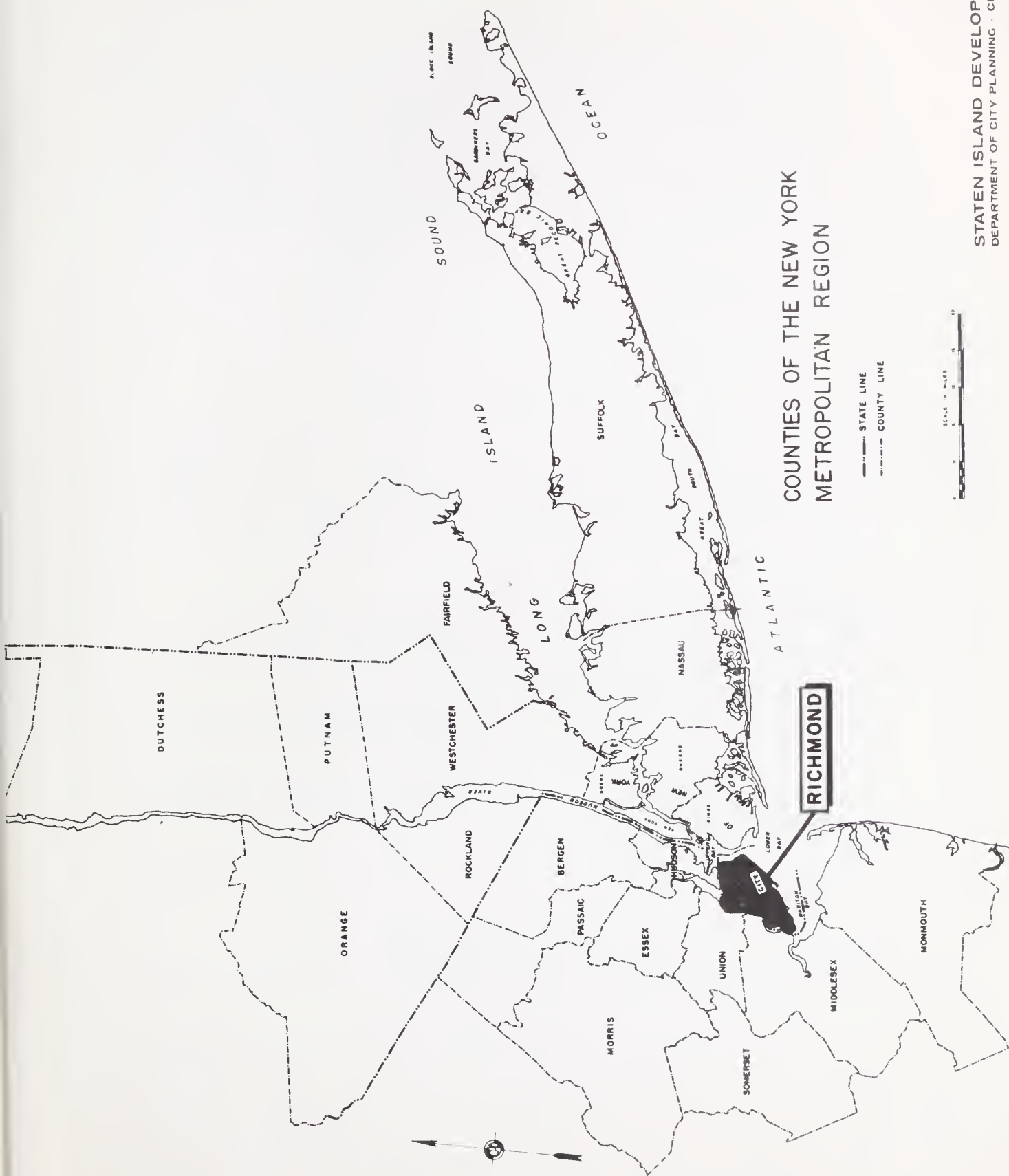
These governmental or quasi-governmental aids or programs suggest the wide-range of activities in which "outside" assistance might be considered. In addition, there are numerous philanthropic foundations, pension funds, union funds, and non-profit institutions which might become investors in Staten Island's future.

Private enterprise institutions--especially those operating on Staten Island--also have a very real stake in sound development practices for Richmond. The lending institutions and banks should consider pooling their resources, if need be, to underwrite special development programs. Similarly, groups, such as the Staten Island Builders Association might strengthen its programs to help members raise their standards and improve construction and site planning techniques. There is need for architectural and site design "clinics"--especially for developers with limited resources--and other practical programs to better acquaint builders with options available within the zoning and building regulations.

Professional and civic organizations have played a vital role in setting the tone for a better Staten Island. These groups have served as an articulate voice for civic improvements. The incentives for an improved living environment can further be spurred by active involvement of indigenous architectural, engineering, and landscape design groups along with lay civic organizations. There has been a noticeable acceleration of such activities in Richmond in recent years. Working closely with local and City officials, civic groups

have demonstrated that constructive programs can be the product of these cooperative efforts.

In the last analysis it is the citizen who must set the standards we seek. He is consumer, critic, judge, and jury. If he settles for mediocrity, he will get it. It is the responsibility of this City to remind every citizen that mediocrity is not part of our heritage; that the City must represent all of the residents of Staten Island as well as the hundreds of thousands of Staten Islanders still to come. The commitment set forth here is not only to satisfy local demands, but to exceed them.



# COUNTIES OF THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN REGION

— STATE LINE  
- - - COUNTY LINE

SCALE IN MILES  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





In February 1966, with the approval and encouragement of Chairman Ballard, I set up a special staff task force under the direction of Sidney J. Frigand, Deputy Executive Director. Its assignment was to focus upon the immediate issues which confronted the new administration and to "state the present situation, the options, opportunities, problems and some framework for the courses of action by the City dealing with the current planning decisions on the Island." I believe the City is in debt to this team for its thorough, thoughtful and creative approach to a difficult task.

Richard K. Bernstein  
Executive Director

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